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CAPTIVE VIGILS.

A

J

P O E M

IN SIX CANTOS OR VIGILS.



L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY

COCHRANE AND M'CRONE.

MDCCCXXXIV.

589.

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY,
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED TO THE MEMORY OF

HIS LATE ROYAL HIGHNESS

FREDERICK, DUKE OF YORK;

TO WHOM IN LIFE, WITH SPECIAL PERMISSION,

THIS WORK IN MANUSCRIPT

WAS ORIGINALLY DEDICATED,

BY ONE INDEBTED TO HIS KINDNESS,

AND WHO IS PROUD OF AN OCCASION TO PROVE

THAT HIS SENSE OF OBLIGATION

SURVIVES THE LOSS OF HIS PATRON.

THE AUTHOR.



P R E F A C E.

It will, I fear, be deemed a dull and presumptuous essay in the present era, to lay before the English reader a rhapsodical work of this alarming magnitude and antiquated shape, destitute of all that dramatic construction and busy incident, which now so generally compose the texture of a modern poem.

To confine my muse to the gloom of a midnight dungeon with a solitary captive—express-

ing himself in the least interesting form of the first person singular—is a poverty of plan rigidly exclusive of all other means of creating interest, than by the simple diversity of accidental thoughts, as they naturally emanate in successive train, one from another. The charge of insipidity, which such deviation from prevailing taste may provoke, will come harder home with the recurrent reflection, that had I selected some tale of romance, descriptive of scene, character, and action, my labour would have been relieved by the supporting interest of the ground-work, permitting not only repose, but convenient license to come and go upon, like a measured and defined path, along which I had but to march with the help of here and there an occasional illustration; instead of beating through a wilderness, without guide or land-

mark—only perhaps, to weary and dishearten the mind adventuring to follow. A further obstacle, to the success of my poem, may exist in its elegiac complexion; for the attention is apt to recoil from changes rung too long upon the plaintive and exclamatory; but had I failed to sustain the tone of lamentation, I should have been unfaithful to my subject, and inconsistent with my poetic situation. Another perilous objection may also be conceived, in my frequent allusions to a system of prison-terror, no longer familiar with the practice of our free country—but continental example chiefly furnished the picture; for there, suspected opinion still hurls the victim to perpetual captivity, and laws of exception devote the insolvent Briton to the pain of imprisonment till death.

audacity of sentiment—blind me to the probability of much merited severity.

My ambition has been confined to the simple and natural, in which, if I have failed, criticism may freely execute its worst upon the rest ; for I myself shall then be the first and most strenuous to vote oblivion to these labours.

To attest, however, the little my vanity presumes on the merits of my Poem, it has lain for years confounded with forgotten papers ; and is now only obtruded on the public from the following motives :—first, in the hope of humbly contributing to create impressions favourable to the Parliamentary project of abolishing all imprisonment, except for crime ;—and, secondly, from apprehension that the bill in progress will

materially weaken the interest of my subject, by soon rendering cruel and unjust infringements on personal liberty as much a matter of past history, as the ancient system of judicial torture—*la peine forte et dure*. I shall now leave my pages to their fate, with this last plea,—the present volume is the first poetic work of

THE AUTHOR.

CAPTIVE VIGILS.

VIGIL FIRST.

Lost to Creation—torn from fellow man,
My day gone down, ere scarce its dawn began ;
Hurl'd from my hopes, and sunk beneath the blow
Of ghastly ruin, and of captive woe :
By faithless friends betray'd, who basely fled
The man who cherish'd, and whose bounty fed,

Of every joy that glads fond hearts bereft,
Poor honor is my sole possession left.

Prone on the abject straw—my wretched bed,
O'er the dank flags of my cold dungeon spread,
Beneath flush'd fever's scorching touch I burn,
And turn from thoughts of anguish—but to turn.
Dread inmate of my couch, a scorpion-nest
Of sad regret infests my harass'd rest ;
With every rustling straw the waking brood
Demand reflection to afford them food,
And as wild thought comes rushing o'er the brain,
Sleep, shrunk aloof, contemplates with disdain
The wasting vigils which I nightly keep,
The sighs that rend me, and the tears I weep ;
While still these watch-worn orbs pervade my cell,
Where silent solitude and darkness dwell,
As if to seek some breast where I might lay
My aching head, and give my sorrows way.

But ah ! in vain at friendship's hand I seek
Kind care to win the tear-drop from my cheek,
And to my pillow, lowly—lone and drear,
Must grief unsoothed pour out the secret tear.
Oh, heaven-born Sympathy ! whose soothing charms
Dim the best pleasures found in Fortune's arms,
Where'er thy tender hand can kindly stretch
To direst woe, man is not yet a wretch.
Still with thy least faint whisper he can find
A force to rally the dejected mind :
Can brace his energies when wrongs oppress,
And nerve his soul to buffet with distress :
Can face the world with courage or disdain,
Mock at his ills—and triumph in his pain.
But when no bosom echoes to our sighs,
When none a tear-drop gathers from our eyes,
When lonely pangs the secret bosom tear,
No pitying ear to hear, no breast to share,
Then to the full, the heart is doom'd to bleed,
And man deserted—is a wretch indeed !

See feebly dim, my half-expiring lamp
With midnight striving, and unwholesome damp,
Scarce chases stone-blind murk—its sickly ray
Illuming objects with a sombre grey,
Sheds a pale gleam, which indistinctly falls
With darkening shadows on these rugged walls ;
Where through the curtain'd haze mine eyes yet trace
The rat's retreat, the spider's lurking-place ;
While aye the gnawing tooth and ticking sound
Increase the awful dreariness around.
Hewn from their quarry bed, huge granites here
In architecture's grimmest forms appear ;
Piled in dire mass impervious to the light,
Stupendous ramparts of eternal night.
The oak, too, forced from Nature's bounteous end,
Here proves no more tired mortal's shady friend ;
Reft from its kingly station in the wood,
Art shapes its strength to various uses rude ;
While hung on ponderous hinge it bars the way
Which leads from these drear horrors into day.

Wrench'd from the bowels of the Earth's profound,
Here metals wrought to fearful forms abound ;
The bolt, the bar, the rivet, and the chain
Convince the wretch his feeble force is vain,
And add increasing terror to the gloom
Of these dread vaults—misfortune's living tomb.
No costly paintings here adorn the walls,
No festoon'd drapery in profusion falls,
Nor silken ottomans invite repose,
Nor orient carpet with rich colour glows :
Fierce desolation only marks a pile
Where comfort never lighted up a smile,
But wretches, snatch'd from all that earth holds dear,
The nullity of churchyard dust find here.
God ! can I think these naked walls contain
My worldly all?—I—once so blest—so vain !
Whose soul long gratified in every sense,
Loll'd in the lap of rich magnificence !
Ah me ! how tyrant Misery can reduce
Our wants and luxuries of daily use.

There, one rude table pleasure never blest,
Where plenty never cheer'd the welcome guest,
Round which the festal voice ne'er sought to chase
The hush of this inhospitable place.
One lonely chair—whose unity bespeaks
That no consoling friend my dungeon seeks.
Yon stick—my calendar—whose notches show
My days, weeks, months, and years of dungeon woe.
An humble cruse, whose space ne'er yet confined
One sweet Lethean draught of cordial kind ;
The spring supplies it—and the stinted bread
Of fell oppression, steep'd in tears I shed,
Now form my sole repast, and ill sustain
My suffering spirit in its house of pain.
Alas ! alas ! the list as I behold,
Thought smiles in pity—and my heart sinks cold.

Oh, Hope ! whose hand hangs out an Iris bow
Of promised gladness through the tear of woe ;

Whose voice, like angel melody, can shower
Sweet consolation on life's troubled hour ;
Neglected here at last—thou passest by
To hearts ~~thou~~ yet canst flatter with a lie.
But say, false friend ! was this a time to flee
From one so long—so fond a dupe to thee ?
Were then the pleasures, painted to mine eye
With gorgeous tinting in futurity,
Mere idle phantoms, only deck'd to lure
My young belief to disappointment sure ?
Yes, yes !—thy blandishments were but a plan
To snare the stripling, and betray the man.
For me, no more thy pencil dipp'd in beams
Of heaven's own light, imparting angel's dreams,
Can charm with sketch of promise—vain thy art
To fool, as thou wert wont, my alter'd heart ;
Truth's sad experience rises to upbraid,
And hisses at thy mockery—faithless shade !

Back as all-busy Memory wings her flight,
And scans the ancient hours of lost delight,
Unthreading many an incident enwrought
Thick through the tissue of my brightest thought,
Imagination, launch'd in concert flies,
And brings the past all glowing to my eyes ;
And as they rake the scatter'd bliss of youth,
Feign all the palpability of truth,
To cheat the willing fondness of the mind
With smiling ghosts of years long left behind ;
Oh ! days of gold and white—e'en to the last,
Must I lament ye, with a sigh,—sweet past !

Not always was my breast joy's harried nest,
For it was once a reliquary blest,
Where my young soul long cradled in a trance,
Stored up as truths vain notions of romance ;
I then might slumber, build a hope, and smile,
I knew no care, and doubted not of guile ;

Life opening like the dawn of brightest day,
I hail'd its light, the gayest of the gay ;
Gather'd fair flowers from pleasure's smiling bed,
And twined them in gay chaplets round my head ;
While like some steed a-field in sportive speed,
I coursed the world, as through a smiling mead,
Lord of my thoughts—and master of my ways—
King of my pleasures—those indeed were days !

Oh it is bliss—pain—both perchance—to track
The varied path which leads reflection back
To those sweet times, o'er which the Memory flings
That shining robe she hangs on favourite things.
There's not a thought, nor action of the boy,
Round which she doth not twine a wreath of joy :
Calls up past roses in their fairest hue,
And hides each blight that canker'd from the view.
Through her bright prism transpeering, Fancy lends
A halo to the forms of ancient friends ;

And, e'en their faults, now absent, but impart
Indulgent yearnings to the pensive heart :
Their ways, their looks, their speech, like written lore—
Nay, e'en the wonted raiment which they wore
Are clasp'd in thought, with such religious care,
The mind must wreck before they perish there.

Lo! Fancy trembles as she bends to trace
Each line and feature of a father's face,
And starts as she repeats the tones that hung,
With sweet persuasion, on his forceful tongue ;
Sighs as she hits the spirit of his brow,
Each turn and movement, well remember'd now,
Though many a year hath fled since Death laid claim
To all the fair distinctions of his frame.
Oh, he had not a gesture, turn, or look,
That lives not here engraved in Memory's book,
Though time with busy care, or pleasure gay,
Hath swept a thousand blissful thoughts away

Since that young time, whose least fond glimpse can
please,

When I rode gallop on his parent knees ;
Or paused with eager heed, to hear him tell
The tale that woke our childish wonder well.

But, he is gone !—gone to eternal rest,
With scarce one trace behind, save in this breast.
That stamp of worth—that intellectual grace
Which sat enthroned with smiles upon his face,
The sterling talents—lovely virtues—all—
Swept, like the forest leaves, unmark'd that fall,
Shed to the wind—and raked by him who sears,
To the vast heap oblivion claims from years.
Thus Time snaps his own chain, link after link,
And the torn fragments in succession sink—
Sink to that chaos fated to receive
The wreck of all that lived—that lives—shall live.
While Time, still speeding on with ceaseless rush,
His prey before—behind—eternal hush,

Broke only by short echoes of false fame,
Belying virtue, or ennobling shame.
But, oh, those purest merits that adorn
Sequester'd life renown rejects with scorn,
Spurns private worth, and blushes to repeat
The virtues that give splendour to retreat.
Then, what is fame ambition holds so dear?—
Not half so precious as one secret tear,
Pour'd from the heart in grateful memory forth,
Affection's tribute at the tomb of worth.

Now Fancy, spurning Judgment's cold control,
Changes her magic mirror on my soul,
And works with all her mimic art to show
Another form, this sigh attests I know.
It is my mother! and this wasted frame
Warms at the thought, and trembles at the name.
Was it for this she o'er my cradle hung,
And blest the first-lisp'd accents of my tongue?

Met all my little wants, and dealt relief
To every sentiment of early grief?
Are these the things fate promised to her child,
As piercing time, her hopes look'd forth and smiled?—
Oh, widow'd mother! ocean waves that roar
With angry surge, remote from ev'ry shore,
Expanded wilderness, and peopled space,
Where crowded dwell full many an unknown face,—
Vales, hills, and dales, and mountains tow'ring high,
Through many a weary league between us lie;—
Whilst thou, perchance, awake each day to mourn
My long-retarded moment of return,
Peer o'er wide ocean, willing to descry
Some fancied bark, slow looming on the eye;
While anxious thought rebukes the lazy gale,
Which yet delays to waft the faithless sail:
Yea, fain believes, as hope augments the speck,
She marks me pacing on the phantom deck,
Nor dreams I linger in a foreign chain,
And ne'er must clasp her in these arms again.

Oh, where amid creation is there found
A heart so callous, which the blissful sound
Of that word, *Mother*, ne'er had force to move
In pure religious sentiment of love?
Through feeling's deepest cell, 'tis Nature's cry,
"Behold your first, your dearest, surest tie!"
The bosom owns it, and the mother's name
Vibrates in holy hymn through all the frame.
A sire's regard in settled hate may end,
Brother and sister cease the name of friend,
E'en pledged connubial fondness may depart,
But mother's love clings ever to the heart,
Like Providence, unceasing in its cares,
Gives life, affection—pardons, and forbears.

Now phantasy pourtrays with touching truth
The scenes familiar to my early youth,
Enhancing all that first attachments bind,
With lasting ties, on every feeling mind.

Behold ! where smiles that much-loved mountain earth
Where first I trod the herb—sweet place of birth !
Where, gladsome, I have pass'd my happy day
In tranquil innocence and sportive play.
There towers the cliff, where, oft and oft the time,
A truant from the school, I loved to climb—
Cull'd the wild flowers that deck'd its rocky side,
Or hurl'd me giddy down the grassy slide—
Scaled every height where danger pledged to yield
A sure protection to the falcon's build ;—
Or laid me, listless, on its beetling brow
O'er the deep precipice that yawn'd below.

There winds away the well-remember'd rill,
That gush'd with gurgling murmur from the mill,
Where, dallying oft with time, my wily hand
Snared the fleet minnow on the sunny sand,
Or paddled down its shallow shores to swim
My tiny navies on the whimpling stream.

Delightful banks ! where happy childhood bought
Whole days of bliss, without one rankling thought.
There smiles the daisied mead, on whose green bed
My comrades play'd, my little palfrey fed ;
The gently-swelling furze-clad hillock, where
I launch'd my soaring kite into the air ;
The place of marbles, and the abbey wall,
Where I was wont to strike the bounding ball.
There glooms the wood beneath whose pensive shade
The first poor essays of my muse were made,
Where oft I ranged with freedom wild to quest
The merry filbert, or the secret nest ;
And broke its tangled solitudes to beat
The sullen cuckoo from his lone retreat :
Chased the shy fugitive from spot to spot,
And venged his flight by mimicking his note.

Turmoiling Manhood !—thy o'ervalued powers
Too soon break in on young life's sweetest hours,

Scatter the joys of innocence like sand,
And wrest the blissful toy from childhood's hand.
Fleets, camps, and senates, what do they bestow
Which equals pleasure boyish instants know ?
Soon as the world's more serious games engage,
Storms close the sunny holiday of age,
The passions tear, desires indulged increase,
And the grown child weeps o'er the wreck of peace.

There curling smoke, scarce lifted by the breeze,
Betrays yon chimney, peeping through the trees,
Thrice cheerful sight ! that happy humble dome
Was once affection's mansion, and my home !
There blazed the fire upon the cheerful hearth,
Where joys domestic smiled, and peace and mirtli ;
There sat my father—here my mother—there
My hoary grandsire fill'd the elbow-chair ;
While Martha, good old nurse ! the live-long day
Watch'd o'er my steps, and join'd me in my play ;

With wink significant, and shake of head,
Found something sapient out in all I said,
And still would sigh, and hope the rule was wrong,
“ But sure, so young, so wise, could not live long ! ”
My grandsire grieved to own the saying true,
Still sought to find the wit—and found it too ;
Would cite my prattle to the folks around,
And with glad triumph made the roofs resound ;
While faithful Carlo, grey in sporting fame,
Staunch friend to man, but deadly foe to game,
Whose age and services did well acquire
A place of honour at the parlour fire,
Would wag his tail, and fondle with the rest—
Bark'd out his pleasure, and my hands caress'd.—
I dare not trust these recollections more,
My heart betrays me, and its fount runs o'er !

No more blest comfort habits earth for me ;
That, once my share, hath long found wings to flee ;

And the wide globe's throng'd periphery round,
Yea, wheresoe'er man's social roof is found,
The eyes of thought with vain inquiry roam
For one sole dwelling I might call a home.
Like some scathed wretch, whom Fate hath spared alone
From earthquake's whelming ruin, to bemoan,
Amid sad ashes, the lamented end
Of all his hopes, his home, his love, his friend—
I but survive destruction, to deplore
My dream of happiness, for ever o'er ;
And to the stranger's friendship still must owe
The only boon of good this heart may know.
For ever banish'd from domestic sweets,
No father hails me now, no mother greets ;
Extinct their blazing hearth, their welcome door
For me will fly upon its hinge no more.

Yet, stay awhile, bewitching Memory stay,
Snatch not thy mirror from these eyes away ;

While splendours spurning, her sad spirit flies
To where, perchance, this suffering being lies,
And thinks, as Fancy lays her down with me,
My couch holds happiness where'er it be.
Oh, with a thought so welcome and so blest
A thousand transports rise within my breast ;
That generous flame which fired the youth to brave
The midnight Hellespont's tempestuous wave—
That warm'd the bosom of the Trojan boy,
Who for his Helen sacrificed his Troy—
Tore Antony from his imperial seat,
And threw him at the fair Egyptian's feet—
That woke the fervour, and inspired the muse
That famed the rocky valley of Vaucluse,
And shed bright lustre o'er the sad retreat
Of weeping love, in cloister'd Paraclete,
Here re-illumed, my breast is doom'd to bear
The constant lamp—preserved with Vestal care.

And yet 'tis strange !—though rolling years have fled
Sometimes on down—more oft with step of lead—
Effacing worlds of sentiment and thought,
Here pledged to long existence—now forgot ;
That still love's ember dies not, but maintains
A deathless ardour in my dearest veins ;
Cherished e'en now, as if it were a ray
Of new-felt passion, caught but yesterday ;
That still this ancient sentiment should be
The sure intruder on each reverie.
Like some fond youth who hoards with pious care
A treasured flower, in token of his fair,
Worn in his bosom till its essence flies,
Until, its freshness gone, it droops and dies ;
But yet endear'd, though perish'd be its bloom—
Wrapt still by love in fragrance and perfume,
E'en so, Alicia's image in my breast
Is nursed—review'd—is treasured and caress'd ;
Though wither'd hopes, and bitter misery blast
The charms that blest my passion in the past.

Oh, my Alicia ! as I maddening lie,
And call thee up to my enraptured eye—
Yea ! dwell on trivial things, still dear to me,
Because these nothings all relate to thee,
Perchance e'en now, the self-same memories float
With fellow-fondness through thy waking thought ;
Throb thy warm pulse in unison with mine,
And wrong thine eyes of sleep's blest anodyne.

Lo ! all those scenes and incidents, we knew
Of yore together, pass me in review :
There spreads the elm, where our first vows were made,
The place of meeting—hallow'd be its shade !—
And there the stream, whose pensive waters roll'd
O'er fairy landscapes, picturesque and bold,
Along whose winding banks we loved to roam,
Till the deep bell of evening warn'd us home ;
Chiding each lessening furlong of our way,
As we conversed with lingering fond delay,

Of Shakspeare's beauties, and of Milton's fire,
Or drew the strain from Pope and Dryden's lyre ;
Arose with Akenside, with Otway mourn'd,
Or smiled with Gay, with tender Hammond burn'd ;
With Thomson, nature sung—or wept the lay
Of Goldsmith, Falconer, Chatterton, or Gray ;
Praised Corneille's splendours, or the purer scene
Of Ferney's hermit, or the chaste Racine ;
Track'd the bold Dante in his sombre flight,
Or play'd in Ariosto's visions bright ;
Admired the grandeur Tasso's powers command,
And Schiller's force, and Wieland, sweetly bland ;
Praised all that melts when Haller's muse complains,
Goëthe's master-touch, and Gesner's tender strains ;
And as she lent the smile, or gave the tear,
They grew more precious, and she seem'd more dear.

Then those epistles, teeming with delight,
The heart-fraught offspring of each sleepless night,

Replete with protestations, hopes, and fears,
And verses blurr'd by lips, and drench'd with tears ;
And oh, those calmer hours, her seraph skill
First won my heart to music—binds it still ;
When wrapt in silent ecstasy I hung
O'er the blest harp—while my Alicia sung ;
Each note angelic some strange power possess'd
To waken new-felt feeling in my breast,
Which harmony, with all its force, in vain
Can never call up in this breast again.

He who hath heard the touch of one adored
Strike passion's language from the quivering chord,
Felt to the fresh heart home—ere truth's black train
Of worldly sorrows hacknied him to pain,
Like me, some sounds his pensive thought must know
Tenacious memory can ne'er forego.

Soft Recollection !—thy sweet tales beget
Tears warm'd with joy—joys blending in regret—

And like mute pictures of lost objects dear,
Snatch'd from our arms, to crumble on the bier,
We cherish them—but cherish to deplore
The traits they show of friends embraced no more ;
The mimic look of those whose perish'd smiles
Time's hand hath swept away, and claim'd as spoils.
So Recollection feasts the pensive eye
With pictures of delight, long since gone by ;
And framed in tears of pleasure and of pain,
She binds them to us with a golden chain.

But hark ! that sound—'twas like the moan of woe
By Echo's voice betray'd in murmurs low—
Alas ! some dungeon'd wretch e'en thus awake
To mental war—heart's agonising ache—
Spurns slumber's kind solicitings, to mourn
The flight of joys that never must return ;
And, pondering sadly o'er his alter'd fate,
Reviews the world with sorrow, or in hate.

And now, where are ye, soul-seducing train
Of recollections, fugitive and vain ?
And Fancy, busy parasite ! where thou,
With all thy dreams and wing'd chimeras now ?—
Fled at the voice of grief, ye, like the rest
Of this world's flattery, may not stand the test.
Oh, traitress Memory ! how cursed is he
Whose only consolation flows from thee !
Let but a groan escape, and in dismay
Thou, with confederate Fancy, fleest away ;
Merging dark sorrow in a blacker shade
By all the glitter of thy vain parade.
'Tis as if spurn'd from some rich mansion, bright
With festal splendour and effulgent light,
To wander o'er a churchyard's midnight glooms
'Mong dismal spectres and surrounding tombs.

E'en still as Death's domain, no stirring sound
Breaks through the awful hush which reigns around,

Save, when at intervals, the ear may catch
The distant hum of the relieving watch ;
Or, as the sentry, pacing to and fro,
Cheers his lone post with snatch of ditties low ;
Or when sharp caution, fearing dread surprise,
As hollow echo to his tread replies,
He harshly challenges the night—and then
Tells his loud arm, and all sinks hush'd again ;
Or, as the erring wind of midnight falls,
With gusty murmur, round these churlish walls,
It wafts faint sounds, in which methinks I mark
The far deep yarring of the watch-dog's bark ;
Inspiring thoughts, still welcomed with a sigh,
Of household calm and blest tranquillity.

While Fancy too will mimic to the ear
Some chariot rolling in its swift career,
Oh, then, what fond, what vain suggestions play,
With feelings mark'd for disappointment's prey !

Half lifted from my abject couch, I rise
With straining ear, and phantom-fixing eyes,
And thus commune, as the far pavement peals
A grumbling tell-tale of the fancied wheels:—

“ There spurning pleasure with gay Fashion’s throng,
“ Perchance some friend, once dear, is whirled along ;
“ Or, haply there, some fair flaunts lightly by,
“ Who once beheld me with no frowning eye ;
“ Ah ! little dreaming in the giddy hour
“ Who pines deserted in this dreary tower,
“ Feeds on the fruits of sorrow’s blasted tree,
“ And counts the prison moments as they flee.
“ Or, Heavens ! may not that vehicle contain
“ Some envoy, sped to break my weary chain ?
“ Fain to abridge me of a pang, he speeds—
“ Here comes—stops—no, alas ! the sound recedes !”

Thus while surmise succeeds each fond surmise,
The wheely murmur lost in distance dies ;

But swift as their rotation, thoughts pursue
The whirling circles their gay progress through,
In fancy with them roll, to where the voice
Of midnight revel bids the vain rejoice ;
And all the pleasure, pageantry, and show,
The thoughtless sons of dissipation know,
Which once allured my ardent heart, but cost
The fool a blissful quiet it hath lost,
In quick succession rise upon my sight,
Array'd in all their false attractions bright.

Those gorgeous mansions, where the midnight blaze
Of countless tapers palls the sober gaze,
To light profusion to the waste of wealth,
The feast of riot, and the war on health ;
Where minions bloat and fatten on the spoil
Of vassal poverty and honest toil.
Vain, buzzing insects ! puppets of parade !
With glittering gauds and borrow'd charms array'd ;

Who, seeking refuge from themselves, let fly
The word of nought and the unmeaning lie ;
Assuming smiles with import to deceive,
And deal out false professions none believe.
Self-loving coxcombs ! whose cold hearts delight
To guile the silly belle, whose manners light
Raise blushes on fair virtue's cheek, that prove
Love in this senseless circle is not love.
Thought-killing cards, the passion-tearing dice,
And all the guilty implements of vice ;
Those rich saloons, where Reason, in a trance,
Reels after Folly in the midnight dance ;
Where fragile beauties cast the gem of truth,
Pick sorrows up, and blanch the bloom of youth ;
Propell'd by pleasure to that dark sojourn,
Where worms await to revel in their turn.

But, ah ! those joys for which alone I sigh,
Thy first best products, O Society !

Those guiltless recreations of the mind
Pure taste hath purged, and sentiment refined ;
Back to the world the spirit travels, fain
To dream their past enjoyments o'er again—
First, to the concert, where the skilful choir
Creates warm rapture angels might inspire,
Speaks to the passion, wantons with the thought,
And throbs the listening breast at every note.

O Harmony !—seraphic art of heaven,
To fall'n humanity in mercy given,
To win us from cold self, and soothe the hour
When irksome care exerts oppressive power ;
Sole relic of lost Eden !—kindly left
When all its other happiness was reft :
Whether in playful mood thy measures flow,
Or tuned to pathos eloquent of woe,
Still the rich spirit, clinging to each note,
Heard, must be felt—felt, ne'er can be forgot ;

The soul proclaims thy empire—feels its birth,
At thy sweet whisper, foreign to low earth ;
'Tis thine to soften—elevate and cheer,
To frame a smile, or congregate a tear—
Can move our nature with a forceful spell,
Draw dormant feeling from its inmost cell—
Can wring the sluggish mind, and sway the whole
Of our frail being, like a second soul.

O thou ! whose daring genius tried the strain
Of Heaven's blest minstrelsy, nor tried in vain ;
Stole down its numbers—and whose art might raise
Even in an infidel the thought of praise ;
All hail, O Handel ! prince of sacred song,
Immortal honors to thy name belong.
And thou, Mozart, whose lays replete with mind,
Leave envious rivalry abash'd behind ;
And tender Haydn, whose effusions wrest
The warmth of feeling from the coldest breast ;

Sweet Cimarosa—Pasiello's fire,
The awe when Pergolese wakes the choir ;
Gluck—Gretry—Rameau—Arne's old English skill—
Rossini's brilliancy, the dullest feel
When to his notes orchestral talents round
Rush to their magic plenitude of sound ;
And Weber, whose tremendous beauties roll
In phantom dramas, storming every soul ;
Auber's expression and dramatic lore,
Mayrbeer, Spontini, and the classic Sphor—
All, all possess a sorcery whose force
Can calm the rush of feeling at its source ;
Dispel in smiles the gloom of dungeons drear—
Win the sad soul enraptured to the ear—
Can baffle pain—allay wild passions' strife,
And make dead solitude a world of life.

Next to the Theatre warm fancy flies,
And all its glitter bursts upon my eyes—

Its brilliant tints—its orchestral delight—
Rich decorations, and its torrent light—
The flirtd fan—waved plumes—and jewels rare
In rich refraction sparkling to the glare,—
The public pleasure reigning round the place,
The 'plauding hand and animated face ;
While the draped curtain rising to my view,
The mimic scene these dreaming eyes pursue.

Transcendent Art ! in all our knowledge deck'd,
Triumph of Genius !—pride of Intellect !—
Fancy's proud Temple !—Virtue's pleasing school !
Where Wisdom, join'd with Nature, points her rule ;
Euripides and great Æschylus based
A fame on thee hoar time hath not effaced ;
The tragic Sophocles, by Pity's tears,
And Aristophanes, by Attic sneers,
Befriending virtue, made the scene impart
The noblest lessons to the human heart.

So did the Muse in this pure end entrain
The Roman Terence, and gay Plautus' vein ;
And Seine's delightful Bards, whose genius woke
The slumbering honors of the busk and sock—
The great Corneille who caught the tragic Queen,
And led her to the fetters of Racine ;
The matchless touch of the divine Molière,
The soul-enchancing pathos of Voltaire ;
And thou, whose fertile mind, but erring skill,
Revived the scenic art in old Castile,
De Vega, hail ! who, happy in the aid
Of Calderona, gave the tragic maid
Rites and a Temple never to decay
While Guadalquiver winds its flowery way.
And thou, whose purer taste and judgment wore
A crown of glory on Italia's shore,
Sublime yet feeling, daring, but confined
Within the rules by principle enjoin'd—
O Metastasio ! what a power was thine !
How rich in soul, how polish'd every line !

And thou, Goldoni, happy to embrace
The Comic Muse, in all her sprightliest grace ;
Who caught, with her conception, force to fly
With smiling praise to immortality !
To all your manes, peace ! blest Bards, who knew
To point the moral, and enchant us too.

Yet, can I part from this delightful theme,
And grant no tributary word to him
Who sack'd the house of thought, and deck'd his lyre
With wreaths of glory, and celestial fire ?
Hail, Shakspeare !—Poet, Orator, and Sage,
The pride—the glory of Britannia's stage ;
How deeply hath this bosom own'd thy power,
As Kemble caught thy fire, and charm'd the hour ?
Or when departed Siddons proved her art,
And brought thy forceful language to the heart ?
How oft hath Hamlet, Brutus, Romeo, Lear,
And poor Othello, wrung my tribute tear ?

While gay Mercutio's wit—shrewd Falstaff's jest,
The peevish Jaques, Touchstone, and the rest,
Still find a power within me to beguile
Habitual sorrow to a passing smile.

Snatch'd from vague Fancy's dreamy realms, and wrought
To seeming life, in the fond loom of thought,
This motley group oft aid me to repel
Reflection drear, and people all my cell ;
I see them move, methinks, and hear them speak,
Can mark the tragic deed—the comic freak—
Partake their humour—sorrow in their pain—
Alas, vain pastime of a fever'd brain !

Oft prompted by these visions, thought escapes
Through Fancy's portal with Shakspearean shapes,
Melts in the cadence of the sylphic band
Subdued to Prospero's all-potent wand ;

Or deftly tripping the Midsummer green,
With light-heel'd fairies round their amorous queen—
Catches their crazy rhymes, and smiles to see
Their busy malice, and their mirthful glee.
Or wing'd to darker scenes, my soul aghast
Rides with fell Hecate on the whistling blast,
Spies haggard sibyls, strangely garb'd and wild,
With magic's damned practices defiled,
Perform on desert heaths their hellish rites,
By phantoms aided, and unhallow'd sprites;
Or rapt in fear, she stalks the lonely round
With dismal ghosts o'er nightly-haunted ground,
Eyes the dread flush of conscious crime that gleams
On guilt awake to thought, or rack'd by dreams;
Thus borne on glowing Fancy's wandering wings,
I float amid imaginary things,
And shape delicious scenes, whose prospects win
Sad meditation from the pang within—
Till Sorrow overtakes me in my track,
Hangs on the wing, and weighs reflection back.

Ah!—what are all the sweets of life combined,
The world's enjoyments, or the feast of mind,
To one fall'n fortune shrouds in captive gloom,
At once their bitter comment, and my tomb?
Or if at times the world's illusive train
Of transient pleasures—recollections vain—
Wrest from my soul the homage of her sighs,
Swift dire reflections on the mind arise:
Strip men and things of all their borrow'd dress,
And show them in their native hideousness,
Till waking sudden to sad truth, I sigh,
And stony echoes to my grief reply.
So look Palmyra's crumbling rests that stand
In sad memento on the desert sand,
To the worn traveller, whose pensive eye
Scans her fall'n grandeurs—scans them with a sigh;
And as he ponders o'er the prostrate rack
Of ancient times, should fancy bear him back
To ages when her buried streets were loud,
With the throng'd bustle of an active crowd,

When rich parade, and Pleasure's joyful cry
Proclaim'd the city of prosperity,
His glowing mind, with busy dreams replete,
Forgets the ruin slumbering at his feet,
To muse upon the scene rapt thought arrays
In all the splendours of its former days—
Till the dire truth with sudden force returns,
And sad regret in lieu of fancy burns.

Then fly me, Fancy!—vain is all thy skill
To deck with borrow'd charms a world of ill;
Around my couch thy peevish infants play,
And chase the tranquil sweets of sleep away;
Cease then thy dreams—to happier haunts repair,
Nor hold the mind thus wakeful to its care.

E'en now, methinks, in pity to my grief,
The drowsy power would minister relief;
I feel a growing lethargy intense
Creep soft and deathlike over every sense;

His darkling mantle gathers on my sight—
He folds me now—sad weeping world—good night !

No ! no ! he scorns a captive's fond embrace,
And flies with loathing from so drear a place :
In vain he lures these eyes in drowsy sign,
Sleep hath no opiate for a mind like mine.
Slave of the blest—no prayer can win him near
The thing of sorrow which implores him here ;
Shy as a timid bird, he hovers round,
But dreads to settle on my dungeon ground ;
Or if perchance he ventures to alight,
With grief's least throb, the coward springs to flight,
And all my importunities are vain
To win his trembling, wild wing, down again.

VIGIL SECOND.

DULL night flies fast—and Dawn will soon unfold
Her eastern portal, bright with radiant gold ;
Will gild the smiling earth, and glad the breast
Of waking multitudes, refresh'd by rest ;
But woe is me !—the rising sun will stream
Athwart these glooms obscure no cheering beam :
Black Night with all her sable train may flee,
Yet still a blacker night remain with me.
Adieu, the pleasures of the rising morn,
Adieu, the mettled steed ! adieu, the horn !
Adieu, ye woodlands ! ne'er must I pursue
Your fallow people through the matin dew—
As erst with comrades bold and nimble hound
I made your sylvan solitudes resound.

The East will glimmer, but the clanging bray,
Which rings the soldier's dwelling with the day,
No more must rouse me—long unwont to stir
To the bold summons of the trumpeter ;
The bustling drum—the bright parade of arms,
And all the pomp of warfare's dreadful charms ;
The charger's haughty neigh—the loud command
Convey'd along the ranks from band to band ;
The march, and counter-march, the brisk attack,
The battle's brunt—the halt—and bivouac—
The sprightly garrison, and all that stamps
A manly pleasure on a life in camps,
Are from my daily ken for ever gone,
And I no more must lead my troopers on ;
Those whisker'd veterans—who so bravely knew
To charge the foe, and force his phalanx through—
Who, when I sought to cheer, were ever found
In spite of hardships with glad smiles around.
Farewell, bold comrades ! 'sieged by sufferings here,
Their hostile force in front and in the rear,

O'ercome by odds, I yield to my defeat,
Without one hope of succour or retreat.

Is this, O God ! a fitting fate for me,
Whose dearest wish was ever to be free ?
Who, since the moment that my bosom beat
With the first generous spark of manly heat,
Still ready rose the boldest to deny
All base submission to harsh tyranny ?
Who ever shouted loudest in the cry
Of liberty—of darling liberty ?
Now stretch'd on prison straw, and doom'd each hour
To brook oppression from abuse of power,
How can I wonder if I nightly lie
Beneath my bonds with sorrow's sleepless eye—
Since from that hour I first was doom'd to see
One bar between blest liberty and me,
Spoil'd of man's noblest rights—I then began
A destiny, unworthy of a man— ?

The free-born Indian, unrestrain'd and rude
As his fierce prey, uncultured as his wood,
Tempt's all my envy, for his soul disdains
False rules which bind the civilised in chains ;
Unbroke to vicious customs and to laws,
Fell in effect, invidious in their cause ;
Blest freedom he inherits with his breath,
And guards the privilege sacred until death.

The hardy Tartar, enemy to all
The polish'd slavery of a city's wall,
Still o'er his houseless Cantons loves to roam,
And pitches at his will his tented home ;
No captive towers with frowning aspect fell
Gloom o'er the desert where he loves to dwell ;
Remote from bonds, his wishes ne'er advance
Beyond his camp and comrades, steed and lance.

So the poor Iclander, whose bosom knows
The sweets of freedom, 'midst his native snows,

Content if he can wrest his winter store
From the wild waves, that dash around his shore,
Yields fate blest homage—for no tyrant hand
Grasps the rude sceptre of his icy land ;
Dire thralldom's ills ne'er cost his eye a tear,
Lord of himself, he glides through life's career,
Yokes his fleet rein-deer to the giddy sley,
And sweeps with freedom o'er his wintry way.

Oh, but I curse my doom—as thought compares
The abject misery of my state with theirs ;
Bred to the false refinements of a clime
Where the frank face of nature is a crime,
Where art frames joys, to mask deep cause of care,
Laws to oppress—and prisons of despair ;
I sigh that Heaven had not ordain'd my birth
With the free savage, on some desert earth,
And leagued the rude harpoon, and simple bow,
As ministers to all my wants below ;

The fragile wigwam and the rocky grot
Had been my home—the boundary of my thought;
The mat, or outstretch'd skin, my blissful bed,
Where health had hung calm slumber o'er my head,
And free as air, content had smoothed a brow
Which ere its time affliction bleaches now.
For with a nature temper'd to be free,
I sicken for thy rights—blest Liberty !
Still find thee, mountain nymph ! my constant theme,
My slumber's vision—and my waking dream.

Old Greece ! how oft the mind strays back to thee,
Proud land of science—boast of history !
The genius of thy laws—thy arts—thy lore—
The deathless muse which consecrates thy shore,
Charm the rapt soul—and as her eye surveys,
She pours the willing tribute of her praise.
Yet, 'twas not these alone, which made thee brave
The sweeping rage of time's o'erwhelming wave ;

It was not Homer's song, nor Pindar's lay,
Secured thy glory to remotest day,
Immortal though their verse—nor all the store
Of deeper knowledge which thy sages bore,
From scientific Egypt, and the land
Where sacred Ganges wooes his golden sand;
Nay, nor thy monuments, domes, columns, fanes,
The artist copies still with fruitless pains,
That rescue thee from that oblivion deep
In which the memories of thy rivals sleep.
Assyrian grandeur, and Chaldean might,
All Media's force, and Persia's splendour bright—
Their captains, poets, sages, learned sects,
Their sculptors, painters, and their architects,
Whose works and actions promised still to claim
Immortal honors at the hand of fame,
From record swept—their names with pain retrieved
Scarce tell the pensive scholar that they lived.
No!—it was Freedom, which confirm'd renown,
And hands thy records through all ages down—

'Twas she lent art and never-dying fire
To the bold strains of thy poetic lyre ;
Yea ! gave to all which appertain'd to thee,
A stamp of genius and proud dignity.

Oh, can we e'er forget what Freedom won
At Salamis—Platea—Marathon ?
Or those brave youths who struck the daring blow
Which laid the last Athenian despot low ?
And bold Miltiades, whose patriot zeal
Beat back from darling Greece the spoiler's steel ?
The firm Leonidas, who stood the pass
Of famed Thermopylæ against a mass
Of hostile thousands—panic-struck to see
The deeds a heart can dare that will be free ?
These with a throng of Grecian heroes more
Fire my warm bosom as I name them o'er,
Beam with bright glory through time's gather'd night
Till old Greece shines one galaxy of light.

Methinks I view their Host—fatigued and worn—
By Freedom's darling hope alone upborne—
Erring o'er worlds of sand—a cheerless waste
By print of human foot before untraced,
Seeking the promised land of their abode,
Blessing their Prophet—Liberty—and God !

Now, carried to the bold chivalric times,
My thoughts still hover o'er those orient climes,
Where mighty Saladin, a meteor rose,
Pride of the crescent—terror of his foes—
Whose scimitar in Freedom's cause knew well
The hostile swords of Europe to repel :
Maintain'd his deserts from the bigot chain
Of Christ-belying fanatics insane,
Sent by shrewd witchcraft o'er the distant wave,
To find from his bold Saracens a grave.
And he who made fell Tyranny deplore
The day she fetter'd the Sicilian shore,

The strenuous Procida—who toll'd a knell
Upon the death-portending vesper-bell,
That woke at once Sicilia's guilty trance,
And shook a terror to the heart of France.
Ay!—and the Switzer's glory, patriot Tell,
Beneath whose sturdy arm Oppression fell,
Who saved his Cantons from a fate of tears,
And wedded Freedom to his Mountaineers.
He, too, whose glory shone transcendent forth,
Bright as a second planet of the north—
Gustavus Vasa ! sped by Heaven to gain
His bleeding Sweden from the tyrant Dane.

And the bold champion of those mountains brown
With rocks stupendous, and with heath o'ergrown,
Where Boreas sweeps with rude intemperance o'er,
Where tempests battle, and where surges roar,
And Ossian wild with inspiration rung
The clifty rocks with echo, as he sung ;

While mountain spirits gather'd to his lyre,
Hover'd around, and rivall'd to inspire :
Wallace, poor Scotia's chieftain !—whose bright name
Stains English annals with a blot of shame,
Who raised the flag of Liberty, and found
A band of plaided warriors ranged around ;
Who staking all upon the dread claymore,
Drove the proud spoiler from their mountain shore,
And made this bold device of Scotia good—
“The hand which grasps the thistle shrinks in blood.”

Now, as I wing me southward to the Thames,
Proud History greets me with a thousand names
That consecrate a stream, whose prow-reft waves
Wash banks untrod by tyrants or by slaves ;
Heroes, who forged a sceptre that commands
An empire to wide ocean's farthest strands.
Behold the cherish'd thoughts which first impress'd
A seal distinctive on my youthful breast—

That forced me from affection and from home,
A war-worn wanderer o'er the world to roam.
But what hath been the meed of all my toil
On many a sea remote, and foreign soil?—
A prison's black embrace—the cruel lot
Of service unrequited, or forgot.
Oh!—that my mind had been content to build
Her tower of hope upon my native field,
Had center'd all her sublunary bliss
In solitude, tranquillity, and peace;
I had not languish'd captive and alone—
And better still—the world had been unknown.
But ah!—I sought to know it, and have found
Vice and corruption o'er its face abound,
Hypocrisy, deception, pride, and art
Sowing the seeds of ill through every part;
Where endless vanities engender sighs,
And disappointment fills men's hearts and eyes;
Where Infamy stalks vauntingly abroad,
And harsh Oppression waves his iron rod;

Where fools bedeck'd with tinsel and parade
Are feasted, flatter'd, envied and obey'd ;
Where empty gold of virtue takes the place,
And shields the foulest villains from disgrace ;
Where bold ambition strives through guilt to climb,
And poverty is stigmatized as crime ;
Where monster calumnies all tongues employ,
And envy hatches mischief to destroy ;
Where friend is but a sound made to express
Those who would stab the victim they caress ;
Where mistress means a well-dissembling cheat,
Who pays the heart's devotion with deceit ;
Where patron means cold heartlessness—with skill
To pledge rich promises, and ne'er fulfil ;
Where the protected means a needy wretch,
Whose conscience hath the property to stretch ;
Where title tack'd to any name implies
A knave, no longer one we may despise.
Nobility ! nobility !—fine word !—
Which means a king may make a slave a lord ;

Yea, what is e'en the Throne?—a giddy chair
With lies surrounded, and with jealous care—
The potent Sceptre, token of command?
A rod of mischief in a master's hand.
And what the Diadem, with all the shine
The people worship, as a thing divine?
A paltry gaud, dug from earth's drossy bed
To dazzle fools, and clasp a puppet's head.
Thus idle mockery, trick and empty state,
Form all we cherish—all we prize as great.
Threadbare delusion covers rank abuse,
Till hideousness seems fair by daily use;
Our fathers pass the lie, like them we rave,
The dupe of dreams, from cradle till the grave.
Yea! what is e'en Religion but a road
Which leads us through wild errors from our God?—
A monster, dress'd in various forms and ways,
Which art directs, and ignorance obeys;
Whose sly professors teach poor fools to read
Contending meanings in the self-same creed—

Each boasts the truth, and holds the other lies,
And shuts in turn his brother from the skies—
Whets the keen knife, or makes the faggot flame
For blood and torture, in the Maker's name.
And what is Justice but an empty sound,
Which means a thing on earth but rarely found?—
Law 'neath her cloak subsists on public pain,
And spurns her dictates to embrace chicane;
Her guilty members thrive at the expense
Of man's most sacred rights—of outraged sense;
Hold injured wretches passive in dismay,
And favouring villains still devise delay.
Justice! the widow's scourge, the orphan's curse,
Is but a supple servant of the purse!
And what is War, with all the bright renown
With which we gild its ills to force it down?—
Mad Fury raised to serve Ambition's whims,
That proffers ribbons for the loss of limbs;
Mere murder back'd by power, and done with form,
Where bubble glory gluts the wolf and worm.

And what is Commerce but the crooked gain
Of seeming honesty, and secret shame ?
Whose practices and narrow maxims teach
The art to grub, to hoard, and overreach.
Nay, what is Talent, but a sordid drudge
To whom the world yields pittance with a grudge ?
And thou, O Genius ! child of fair renown ?—
But only one, who is not just a clown.
And Wit ?—a common thing which runs the street ;
And Judgment ?—Wonderous Phœnix rare to meet.
And what is Strength ?—brief comrade of the clay ;
And Health, blest Health !—a weak and transient ray.
And what is Beauty but a matin flower
Which droops and withers ere the vesper hour ?
We prize the cheek where blends the blushing rose,
The polish'd brow that mocks heath-bedded snows :
The eye of fire—the glossy unmix'd tress
Of smiling youth's unblemish'd loveliness ;
But soon, alas ! the boon of Beauty flies,
The spark expires that lightens in the eyes ;

The weary cheek soon yields its damask bloom,
And takes Fate's hollow index of the tomb :
Deep-furrow'd wrinkles, and sad lines of care,
While Time hangs out his ensign—hoary hair.
And what is Learning, mankind love to praise,
To which the student dedicates his days ?—
Nay, the repose of nature-soothing night,
In painful courtship o'er the lamp's pale light ?
A fruitless mockery—a jest austere,
Full bright at distance, but blind darkness near ;
The dupe thinks he hath caught her, makes his boast,
Grows grey, and sighs, to find he clasps a ghost.
Her mass of science seems a gentle height,
With luscious fruits and flowers, and garlands bright,
To the unletter'd mind, which only sees
But just sufficient to impose or please.
But oh ! it is a mountain, bare and steep,
Where he must strive full hard, yet slowly creep,
Who would to towering eminence attain,
Where nought at last compensates for the pain.

Ungrateful Toil sweats naked at its base,
Where vain Presumption keeps his resting-place,
And Hope invites, but when we reach her, flies,
Or midway leads us blindfold to surmise,
Where Systems throng, and Reason hides her light,
And Folly gravely proves that black is white.
But on the summit, where few mortals reach,
Truth and experience woeful lessons teach—
Prove that the whole scholastic pile was raised
By plodding fools—absurd chimeras crazed ;
Who in succession, adding lie to lie,
Lost sight of sense and pure simplicity :
A heap of fallacy—attractive—fair—
But based on ignorance, and lost in air.

And this is then the world the fool adores,
And which my heart unthinkingly deplores !
Then court it, and be blest—ye happy few
Who find it yet holds happiness for you ;

And may Adversity's envenom'd tooth
Ne'er wake your inexperience to the truth.
For me, Misanthropy !—guide thou my days,
Here nurse a scorn of mankind and their ways ;
Wean me from pleasures—harden me to bear
The weight of my captivity and care,
That I may sink from being into nought,
A thing without a passion or a thought.

Yet, peace, false lips !—could this tumultuous mind
Ere cease to throw some fond regrets behind ?
Could the bright fire of sentiment depart
From its old embers, glowing in my heart ?—
Ah, no ! though gall'd by mankind, how believe
My soul can curse them, and Alicia live ?
Doth she not rule my mind, and bid it stray
To the lost pleasures of the world away,
And prove by memory, life can yield a share
Of blissful happiness, as well as care ?

Yes, yes,—the things of earth seem cursed or blest,
But just as fate reflects them from the breast ;
And if for me their charms have ceased to shine,
This heart must answer, for the fault is mine.
Yes—mine the fix'd disgust, and funeral hue
That now hangs drearily o'er all I view ;
'Tis wither'd hope, and sorrow's secret stings,
Whose throes distort the face of men and things.

Yet why should I despair at transient grief,
When there is by a prompt and sure relief ?
Life's ills are but the fardel of a day—
Wait till to-morrow, and they fleet away.
Sighs heave not in the breast of death—no tear
Hangs on the eyelid closed upon the bier.
There ends regret—there dies the inward thorn,
The bleeding wounds of pride, the scathes of scorn,
And oh ! that pain still keener than the rest,
To see the fool and villain always blest.

Yes—a vile dust is all that soon remains
Of him who smiles in power, or weeps in chains ;
The heartfelt sting, black slander's poison'd breath
Pierce not the tomb—gall not the ear of death ;
And oh, from dungeon-walls the spirit flies
As swift as from a throne, to native skies ;
Leaves in a moment all her woes behind,
The pangs of body, and the war of mind.

Then it were wisdom in my soul to steel
Her tender sense to every human ill ;
To think and act as if the world held nought
Of pain or pleasure worthy of a thought ;
And spurning all, its lovers hold most dear,
Return them taunt for taunt, and sneer for sneer.

Then let oppression crush, and those elate
With fortune's smile add sorrow to my fate ;
In conscious honor arm'd, e'en now I feel,
Spite of my lot, I rise above them still.

And yet, let those who flee my bonds beware,
I am not doom'd alone to captive care ;
Fate's favour'd minions, nearer than they think
Touch that misfortune from whose face they shrink ;
They yet may learn she runs as fast as pride,
And oft invisibly treads side by side ;
Can when she lists inflict a whelming blow,
And strike at once bright splendours into woe.

How many, fondly blest as I have been,
Who view things smiling as these eyes have seen,
Who find the earth a most enchanting sphere,
With pleasure teeming—throng'd with objects dear—
For whom the close of every happy day
Is but the prelude to a dawn more gay :
For whom each Spring, in sweet succession bright,
Wings blest hopes homeward, and gives new ones flight :
For whom drear winter's train of frowning hours
Dance lightly past, attired in summer flowers :

Who still are destined, ere life's torch burn out,
To form acquaintance they yet little doubt :
To clasp the hand of sorrow, and to see
Their days obscured in dungeon'd misery !
Who can assume to-morrow will not find
His hopes dispersed like down before the wind,
His bosom doom'd to sorrow o'er the dead,
The friends he clings to most, in treason fled.
For Care tracks Joy's light steps with baleful eyes,
And grasps each gem she scatters, as a prize ;
Mocks when she views her weave the blooming wreath,
Creeps from behind, and twines her thorns beneath ;
Till bold with time, she from her ambush springs,
Rends Joy's bright robe, and shows the hidden wings ;
When the fair trembler, shrinking with dismay,
Strikes her swift pinions out, and bears away.
And say, what heart hath known her to return,
When envious Care had once set up her Urn ?
Yes !—I have known a roseate cheek to wear
The beam of bliss, now pallid in despair ;

Have seen the wretch from giddy fortune hurl'd
To keenest suffering, shunn'd by all the world ;
Ay !—and have mark'd the man of noblest mind,
Break down and crawl the meanest of mankind.
Then ye who clasp prosperity, respect
The Jail, consign'd to odium and neglect—
Leave not unsuccour'd, friendless, unconsol'd,
Him, the drear depths of dungeon-glooms enfold ;
For who, secure of destiny, can tell,
He ne'er shall linger in a Prison Cell?

VIGIL THIRD.

Once more the bell from forth the prison tower
Scares the dull bird of night, to toll the hour ;
Hangs on the laden wind, and hoarsely sings
A solemn requiem to departed things.
The wretched tenants of these dungeons drear,
To her nocturnal gossip lending ear—
Themselves as wakeful—mourn the death of time,
And sigh responsive to the awful chime.

Who knows the wrongs and sufferings that lie
Wrapt in these shades, conceal'd from every eye ?

The pangs that gather, and the tears that flow,
The throbs of anguish, and the bursts of woe ?
The splendid talents and proud virtues crush'd
In moral murder here for ever hush'd ?
The noble, mean, the upright, and the cheat,
All in this temple of misfortune meet.
As hungry churchyards welcome the mix'd shrouds
Which death dispatches in promiscuous crowds,
E'en so the prison opes a ready breast
To the throng'd victims of a fate unblest.

Here harsh Adversity exults to stretch
The proud Patrician with the peasant wretch ;
Brings pride abash'd at vain pretensions past,
On dungeon straw to know itself at last ;
Compels the hand to number the poor pence
Which whilom scatter'd untold opulence ;
Teaches the epicure by famine rude,
How blest is water—bread how sweet the food ;

And shows ambition, grandeur less than this,
Freedom, with humble competence and peace.

Here the poor Scholar mourns the pains he took
To glean his only knowledge from the book,
Envies the worldling who ne'er sought to pore
O'er ponderous tomes of antiquated lore,
Yet worshipp'd by the herd, who censers hold
To brother dulness, deified by gold.
No honors academic here we find
Crown the sad studies of the captive's mind ;
He toils in sorrow, and his meed is sighs,
E'en for the world his wisdom would despise.
Through Seneca, his griefs for ease explore,
And sage Aurelius' rules he ponders o'er ;
Yea, scans each precious page, whose writers thought
To reconcile the wretched to his lot,
But finds they preach—and throws the volume by
To wipe a refutation from his eye.

The Veteran, wasted with his years and scars,
The sad remembrancers of former wars,
Here sinks forgotten 'neath the hand of care,
Press'd hard and heavy on his hoary hair.
Like some old arm whose temper hath withstood
The hostile shock, in frequent fields of blood,
Borne in the day of need, with glittering pride,
Proudly imposing at the hero's side,
But cast away when battle's dread alarms
No longer call for the defence of arms :
Worn out of fashion, and defaced by rust,
Left to corrode in darkness and in dust—
So thrown aside, the aged soldier falls,
Decay'd and tarnish'd, in these dismal walls.
But yet, e'en yet—the martial ardours fill
The Ancient's breast, and animate him still.
Warm'd at the deeds his memory loves to trace,
He limps a march across the dungeon space,
Figures a drum, and, as his heart expands,
The vaults re-echo to his stern commands,

As, all obedience to the warlike cry,
Fancy defiles the old battalion by ;
While round his cell the humble chalk portrays
The plans of his campaigns of youthful days—
All strict to rule of science—every part
True to Pollard, Cohorn, and Vauban's art.
Here figure bastions his bold courage gain'd—
There lie entrenchments his tried skill maintain'd—
Here stands the village won—and there the chalk
Marks the old mill of which he loves to talk—
So often lost and won—till with the night
He blew it up, and camp'd upon its site.
Here was the bridge he carried—there again
Was that infernal skirmish on the plain ;
Here, was the well-schemed ambush dress'd—and there
He led the charge that forced the solid square.
Yon point unfinish'd—painful to his view,
(And Fancy, musing, owns it painful too)
Would mark the spot, where, foremost in the fray,
The shot attain'd which tore his limb away—

Arrested glory—laid ambition dead—
And brought a prison o'er his aged head.
Born with the thought, tumultuous feelings rise,
Knock at his breast, and trickle at his eyes ;
And prying round, lest human soul should hear
A soldier's sob, or spy a soldier's tear,
He shrinks to silence and his dungeon bed—
Sad pillow for a veteran's hoary head !

Here the Financier pines, whose bosom fed
Transcendent projects, vain illusion bred :
Exhausted Algebra, to count the gain
He dream'd to conjure down, like showering rain :
Now all his hopes to rival Cræsus fled,
He harbours misery and despair instead.

And here the Merchant in default, and foil'd
Of the ambition'd plum for which he toil'd,
Bans his insatiate greed with impious lips—
Weeps his lost wealth—the wreck of all his ships :

Scant is his fare—but Virtue ever sends
The food of consolation to her friends.
Hard is his couch—but Conscience, spite of woe,
Still softly spreads her downy couch below.
Dark is his dwelling—but the glorious light
Of other worlds will soon burst on his sight.
With weary drag the captive moments flee—
But what are these to blest eternity ?
Hope, such as his, can smile as they creep by,
Chains end in death—the tomb leads to the sky!—

Here the unhappy Artist, whose warm heart,
Like all enthusiast brothers of his art,
Contemning maxims of the world, gave birth
To sentiments exotic to this earth ;
The slave of fancy—tinting all he knew
In wild imagination's borrow'd hue
Till sorrow and a jail o'ertook his youth,
And roused his startled bosom to the truth.

Though exiled from the Nature he adores,
His mind escapes the grief of all its sores,
To catch her varied form through earth and sky,
Adorn'd by fancy—warm'd by memory.
Or scanning history, past events are wrought
To re-existence in his forceful thought ;
Departed Heroes—the illustrious great,
Beneath his touch again resuscitate :
Breathe on the canvas—group'd, relieved, and warm
With all imagination's fervid charm.
The strife of passion—attitude and grace,
The character depicted in the face—
The falling shoulder, and the swelling chest,
The head erect, with dignity imprest ;
The flowing toga hung with graceful fold,
Symmetric elegance—rude nature bold—
Fore-shortening—true perspective—skilful shade,
Brought here to strengthen objects, there to fade—
Engross the study of his mind in turns,
And feed the fires with which his genius burns ;

And as they glow, his mind flies back on time
In quest of subjects for his art sublime,
Wings him to Greece or Rome, and the dark age
Of Gothic terror and of feudal rage.
Here a Madona, pensive and resign'd,
Her face the mirror of a sainted mind,
Bends o'er her infant god, with awe and love,
In looks a queen, in innocence a dove.
Prayer hovers on her lip, and hope appears
To gild her brow, and soothe the mother's fears ;
While angels bless the babe and guard his sleep,
Admire the ills he bears for man—and weep.
There, tear-eyed Magdalen, forlorn and fair,
Deplores her frailty in dishevell'd hair,
Voluptuous ev'n in woe—for passion speaks
A something more than pious on her cheeks ;
While wondering saints around seem fain to chase
The thought of Heaven to worship at her face.
Here Paul defends his faith with holy fire,
There Judas scowls, and Herod broods his ire :

Here Pilate dooms to death with coward lips,
And Peter listens to the cock—and weeps ;
Here martyr'd Jesus bows his dying head,
While awful gloom prophetically dread
Hangs over Nature like a funeral pall,
And the far temple shows its rending wall.
There, wild with inspiration, blest Saint John
Scans the dread secrets of th' eternal throne,
Rapt—raised—inspired—his soul through upturn'd eyes
Communes in awful visions with the skies.

And now the Greek mythology displays
Its rich machinery to his raptured gaze ;
The splendid senates of the fretful gods,
Their haunts—adventures—and their bright abodes :
Here Venus, rising fresh from Neptune's arms,
First shows to infant day her brighter charms ;
Grace in each motion, pleasure in her eye,
While admiration hails her through the sky.

Jove thunders o'er his Ida—Vulcan blows
His roaring furnace, and all Etna glows :
There soft Apollo sweeps the lyric string,
And the nine nymphs dance round him in a ring :
Here Pallas shines in proud untasted charms,
And Dian gives her to Endymion's arms :
There Pluto throned with Proserpine his queen,
In sombre mood surveys th' infernal scene,
Surrounded with pale ghosts, and demons fell—
The mournful court of majesty in hell !
Here Hebe fills the cup—there Psyche lies
A feast of ecstasy to Cupid's eyes ;
While agile Hermes winds the winged horse,
And Hercules essays his muscled force.

Fertile in dreams—now wandering Fancy builds
Delightful fabrics on Arcadia's fields ;
Ere vice and gold proscribed the peace of man,
First rural innocence, and smiling Pan :

Hangs with light wing o'er Tempe's blissful vale,
Where constant flowers eternal sweets exhale :
Where health, and laughing loves, play in each breeze,
Woo the pure gurgling streams, and fan the trees :
Each grot some Naiad's haunt—each grove the shade
Of love-sick satyr, or some sylvan maid ;
While the light Graces, with the jocund Hours,
Dance o'er the green, and people all the bowers,
In each step copied by a sprightly train
Of airy nymphs, estranged from every pain,
Who practise many a freak and many a wile,
To light up mirth, and captivate a smile,
Tripping with limb untired, and look elate,
In giddy round, and never-ending fête.
Till dupe of plastic thought, these visions seem
The blest reality, and not a dream—
The prison vanishes—the walls—the ground—
Seem smiling Tempe—Tempe all around !
His heart expands—its griefs an instant cease
To beat 'mid self-created worlds of bliss :

He sees not—hears not—feels not—all his mind
Is to the fields of revery confined ;
His glowing pencil o'er the canvas flies,
And trees, and flowers, the waters, and the skies,
Drawn on his thought, now cheat the outward view,
And what was only fantasy seems true.
Sudden the eye wild inspiration fired,
Is cold and fix'd—its frensy hath expired—
Pausing to snatch a thought, one fatal glance
Hath caught his chains and' dissipates his trance :
Sorrow, awaking, springs to his embrace,
And pales the flush of genius on his face ;
While from his unnerved hand the pencil falls,
His cheek its wonted watery guest recalls,
And round his dungeon, guided by despair,
He casts a look and calculates his care ;
In heart-broke silence contemplates the truth,
Marks every bar, and mourns his ruin'd youth ;
Quivering in tears, the hateful objects swim—
Nature—he feels—must smile no more for him.

Here the Musician breathes to silent night
Sounds that have feasted monarchs with delight ;
Cast through the ear a spell o'er every heart,
Subdued to admiration of his art.
Now all his skill, once millions would extol,
But serves to nurse the anguish of his soul.
Through darkness drear his lonely lute complains,
And Silence starts astonish'd at the strains ;
While Horror's reign invaded, she exalts
The voice of moaning Echo round the vaults,
As through arch'd corridors, and winding ways,
Malice or Pity floats these midnight lays,
And drops them with full force at many a cell
Where grim Despair with suffering wretches dwell.
Oft in that hour when mystic Terror reigns,
And Torpor binds this breathing world in chains,
When nought but Sorrow wakes, and Darkness flings
Her inky mantle over men and things,
His accents have attain'd mine ear, and stole
Like angel's whispers on my listening soul ;

And sometimes, as if cheerful sunshine broke
Across his mind, and grateful feelings woke,
His hand would wanton lightly, and prelude
Neglected melody of livelier mood :
Yet still there was a something sad, which hung
Upon these unwont numbers while he sung,
Which proved the heart partook not, and confess'd
The light Allegro stranger to his breast.
And I have mark'd these playful measures change
To notes so rapid—broken—wild—so strange,
That vainly hath the ear besought to know
If such were sounds of gladness or of woe ;
Till, as invaded by some rebel thought,
'Gainst which his troubled bosom vainly fought,
He quicken'd now—then dwelt upon the strain—
Paused—ran along the notes—then paused again—
Till vanquish'd by the strong returning force
Of stubborn sense, he gave it all its course.
The strain he breathed a mother might have sung,
To soothe him into soft repose when young—

Perchance a sister's thought endear'd the lay,
Or some warm friend no more—or far away,
Or love inspired—for well it spoke the pains
A disappointed heart, alas ! sustains,
When blighted passion, and torn hopes assure
The heart of rankling pain, and hopeless cure.
And yet, whatever theme breathed in the song,
He might not dwell upon its pathos long—
For breaks and pauses with the strain increased,
Till, faintly dying, it entirely ceased ;
Whilst drowsy Silence, anxious to regain
The tomb-like stillness of her wonted reign,
Quell'd the deep throat of stony Echo round,
At once responsive to no living sound,
Save to low-smother'd sobs—enough to tell
Sad tidings of the poor Musician's cell.

And here, alas ! the wretched Husband torn
From soft domestic comfort, left to mourn

The absent hand which used to dry each tear,
That radiant smile whose beam was wont to cheer :
The friend who watch'd when sickness pull'd him down,
Wept at his pain, and chased each gathering frown :
Who, when bright Fortune triumph'd in his train,
Presumptuous Vanity assail'd in vain :
Whose angel worth, too dignified for pride,
Chasten'd his mind, and served him for a guide ;
And when black Penury obscured the day,
And friends—and hope—and comfort shrunk away, ;1
Still in her bosom—still in her embrace—
He found a haven and a resting-place ;
Then—then she rose, exulting o'er the crowd,
And felt, indeed, 'twas virtue to be proud.
But doom'd to weep alone, no darling now
Dispels the gloom which settles on his brow :
Brings home his thought to sweet domestic bliss,
And proves that joy still waits him with a kiss ;
For friendless now—unheeded—forced to brood
O'er all his ills in widow'd solitude,

Deep—deep he execrates these walls that part
His fond embrace from her who shares his heart.

Here the poor Brother lingers day by day,
To disappointment's inward stings a prey ;
His bosom yearns for succour—while his pride,
Choking complaint, enforces him to hide
His lot from all the world—yea, e'en from him
On whom warm Hope still builds her fondest dream—
The fellow partner of a Nurse's care,
That early playmate who partook a share
In all his infant sorrows, and the joy
Which smiling marks the records of the boy :
His chum of mischief in the pester'd hall,
Associate in his kite—hoop—marbles—ball :
Whom the same horn-book taught, and same ferule
Awed through that odious Virgil in the school :
Who shared the parents' blessing, and who cried
In bitter concert when those parents died—

His Brother !—object of affection dear—
Ah ! can he doubt who pines in durance here ?
Knows he the fate of one whom nature gave
To share his heart from cradle to the grave ?
And, chill'd by selfish sentiment, disdain
A father's offspring prison'd and in pain ?—
Experience whispers—“ Yes ! ” and long must roam
The captive's wishes towards his alter'd home ;
No kind asylum now that roof must yield,
The father's chair—is by a Brother fill'd.

Yes !—there are beings, heartless as the stone,
Who feel for no misfortune but their own,
Who tear all ties of kindred, and disclaim
The pleasing interest in a Brother's name ;
Who, strangers to affection, can repress
All pity for a Brother in distress ;
Would brook to see him sicken, pine, and die,
In friendless pain, and squalid poverty.

Oh !—that salt oceans of remorse might roll
On him, harsh Nature brands with such a soul !
Left at his final hour to lonely sighs,
Without on earth one friend to close his eyes—
May the wroth shade of him he would not save
Haunt his last thoughts, and hiss him to his grave !

And here the Father pines, bereft of those
Who blest his days, and promised, at their close,
To foster him in turn, and to assuage
The sad infirmities of weak old age :
With smiles he hail'd futurity, and piled
The fondest hopes e'er founded on a child :
His offspring were the pillars of his rest,
Beacons of comfort to his wasting breast :
As tender plants he nursed their growing years,
Warm'd them with smiles, and water'd them with tears :
Pruned shooting vice away, and laid the base
Of inward merit, and external grace.

Heaven blest his care—and pleased did he behold
Their worth acknowledged by the young and old ;
Their virtues promised honor to his grave—
His girl was beautiful—his boy was brave ;
And all that he desired beneath the sky
Was to behold them happy, and to die.

But Disappointment mark'd him for her prey,
And brush'd the hopes that warm'd his heart away :
The traitor Joy forsook his roof, and fled,
While Sorrow pour'd her phial o'er his head :
The jail received him—and its closing door
Groan'd on its grating hinge—"be blest no more !"
Oh, how his heart in desolation sinks
As darkling o'er brood-Agony he thinks
Of all the ills 'neath which his boy must bend,
Bereft of fortune, and without a friend—
Injured by knaves—by fools misunderstood—
Tempted to evil—ridiculed for good—
For merit envied—for high spirit fear'd—
Hated for what the happier are endear'd :

He falls, perchance, beneath his adverse fate,
O'erwhelm'd with wrongs he may not vindicate.
Soul-harrowing thought!—his Daughter too appears,
Blighted by indigence, and worn with tears
That dim a face with loveliness once bright—
Her mother's image, and his heart's delight ;
He sees her wretched, while hell's demon wings
A scorpion thought, which as it rises, stings—
It paints his daughter, victim to the guile
Of some destroyer—mask'd in honor's smile—
Who blasts her innocence—pollutes her mind,
And stabs a peace she never more must find :
Oh! fiends of human pain! spare, spare that dart—
Such thought hath power to break a Father's heart !

Here the lone wretch, torn from each blissful tie
That binds man's heart to heart beneath the sky,
Now widow'd—childless—brotherless—he knows
No parent home, no promise of repose ;

And as life's sands in lingering atoms run,
He loathes his bonds—yet sighs not for the sun ;
Mankind—their world—and all its changes seem
A sickening picture of disgust to him ;
For oh ! he knows them well, and much hath seen
To furnish matter for eternal spleen.
'Tis said, his youth was splendid and profuse,
Cast to each generous impulse freely loose,
While gay as sunshine of glad Summer's morn,
Care press'd not to his soul one single thorn ;
Or if, perchance, keen Sorrow's inward smart
Clouded his brow, and tingled at his heart,
Pleasure stood by, with ready hand to pour
An anodyne to lull the transient sore.
Warm to romance, and restless as the wind,
He sought each corner of the globe to find
A secret, nameless something, which his soul
Chased still beyond his grasp from pole to pole ;
Through various climes, with varied fate he roved,
Here fixed a friend—there found a nymph he loved :

Oh, world ! fell world !—alas, I might have said
That here he was “ deceived ”—and there “ betray’d.”
But Fortune soon abandon’d one who woo’d
Her fickle favour, but to scatter good :
Withdrew her partial smiles, which ever shone
On those who love her for herself alone ;
And, sinking from his view, at once snatch’d back
The radiant beam she first shed o’er his track.
His merits now were question’d, or denied,
His morals—nay, his honor was belied :
That very kindness of his soul which still
Broke through each word and deed—sole source of ill,
Was named a “ madness,” “ weakness,” or “ romance,”
Which only hit on good sometimes—by chance.
Cursing the world, he broke with men, and swore
To steel his heart, and trust to them no more :
Fortune believing, heard—and came again—
Sought all his soul, but sought it still in vain :
His bounty yet relieved the wretch’s prayer,
Wealth smiled at home, and friends again were there ;

And these, as erst, to Ruin oped the door,
And fled his cry for succour as before.
Thus used to all vicissitudes—he led
A life now blest with ease, now scant of bread ;
Till chill'd by disappointment—worn with care—
And wean'd from hopes as fugitive as air,
Sick, sick of all the artifice which stamps
The city and the hamlet, courts and camps,
He bent to Fate—and gave the struggle o'er,
Resolved to chase ideal good no more ;
For nought in life was new—no untried place
Possess'd the shade he languish'd to embrace—
His bosom wither'd—and the sparks that fired
His fancy once, in chill regret expired.
Reckless of all that now might chance below,
Sceptic of happiness—inured to woe—
He fell from ill to ill, and bore the change
Like one who knew no human sorrow strange ;
The world—as it is wont—fallen worth assail'd,
Tore every wound, and, as they smarted, rail'd ;

Man vied with man to throw the keenest dart
Of poison'd mischief at a broken heart ;
He mock'd their shafts—his breast had ceased to sigh,
Malice grew stingless, now his eyes were dry—
They gnaw'd like famish'd vipers on his name,
But he disdain'd their praise—despised their blame.
But soon revenge devised a plan to blast
His days with desolation to the last,
And dragg'd him to these dungeons, where he lies
Till Death withdraw their horrors from his eyes,
And yield him in the dust a blest repose,
Impregnable to misery and to foes.

VIGIL FOURTH.

Oh! ye unfeeling, selfish, proud, and vain,
Hot in pursuit of pleasure and of gain,
Whose vices, coils, and interests, imply
That wicked thing yclept Society—
Leagued by a band of mischief to destroy
The fallen wretch, and his last glimpse of joy—
Small it affects your frigid breasts to know
Who pine neglected in this house of woe,
Their sorrows or their wrongs—enough for ye,
That *these* are wretches—*this* is misery!

Which of ye blest with happiness and ease,
Sated with all that can enchant and please,

Extends a thought beyond his own desires,
His lawless appetites—unholy fires—
To contemplate a prison's black abode,
And lend his hand to light the captive's load ?
Who cares to learn where worth in want abides ?
Who seeks the haunt where injured honour hides ?
Who would not shun the wretched with dismay,
As if a snake were coiling in his way ?
Who loves to dry the tear—unroot the sigh—
Soothe fretful pain—and hush affliction's cry ?
Leave pity to enthusiasts, who pretend
That it is sweet to be Misfortune's friend !
Who, drunk with fervour, foolishly believe
The heart can taste a luxury to relieve—
To cherish souls that weep—and to beguile
The cheek of sombre gloom to light a smile.
Such are the acts of weakness we recall
With idiot Howard, and Saint Vincent Paul !
Companions of the sad—who loved to lead
The angel Succour to the house of need—

Who felt mysterious happiness to shed
Joy o'er the dungeon and the sick man's bed.
By beggary tax'd—by whining prayers pursued,
Strange renegades from self—the slaves of good—
To heaven the fools through charity would climb,
Nor could believe adversity was crime ;
Praise such for form, but emulate them not,
Words, words suffice—but oh ! beware the thought—
Still more the deed, weak pity prompts for those
Whom Heaven hath stamp'd with reprobated woes.

Should Poverty assail your dearest friend,
Blush not to own your friendship at an end ;
Disguise your treachery in the public eyes
By well-invented calumny and lies ;
And safely vent the venom of the heart—
For who will take proscribed Misfortune's part ?
The World will credit all—imagine more—
Surprised his crimes escaped its eyes before.

Loathe the mean garment, and the languid air,
Which timid Poverty is wont to wear,
Shrink from the hollow eye, and downcast look—
For these denote whom Fortune hath forsook ;
The vague reply—lost absence—hurried tone—
Which desperate forced vivacity puts on :
The rising heat, without apparent cause,
The inward murmur, and the sudden pause—
These signs a secret strife of soul betray—
Are mute appeals—spurn, spurn the wretch away !
Say of your friend whom Fate chastises hard,
“ That every prodigal meets his reward—
“ That long your doubts foresaw the coming blow,
“ Blamed his excess—but fear’d to tell him so !
“ That need on blind improvidence must wait,
“ And he who piles his load should bear the weight.”
Still more—shrink from the jail—for there abide
Sorrows ’twere meet that massive walls should hide,
Where clamour with petition of distress
Might sue your purse, or din you for redress.

Sage Catos of society!—ye Saints,
Whose wary rectitude no charge attaints!
So strict in principle—and so severe,
Ye shrink from ev'n a generous fault with fear—
Stick to your mask, keep morally sublime,
But still, thank God, ease shields your souls from crime;
For much I fear, did Fortune's favour fail,
The purest of the pure would crowd the jail—
Not with the wretch injustice dooms to sigh,
But in the well-earn'd bonds of infamy.
And ye, remorseless Creditors! who keep
Your victims weeping while ye soundly sleep,
Heap odium on the prison, and declare
Desert marks every tear which trickles there!
Almighty Heaven!—that living graves should hold
The poor defaulter of some paltry gold,
Condemn'd to time's irreparable loss,
Nature denied—existence damn'd for dross—
Years marr'd for counters—honour slurr'd with stain,
By rapine foil'd, perchance, of guilty gain.

Can all the ore of famed Potosi's mine—
Can all Golconda's treasured gems that shine—
Nay, all the wealth vain mortals value, buy
The worth of one least ray from yonder sky ?
Ye all exclaim, that life is but a span,
And mourn the grave hours hurry still on man—
And yet without compunction ye can doom
Your debtor to a jail's untimely tomb !
If this be justice, mercy on your souls,
When Heaven's blue veil before God's visage rolls,
And the Archangel's all-astounding blast
Shall summon ye to dread account at last.
Oh ! then what pity do ye hope to find,
Whose hearts denied it to your fellow-kind ?
To 'venge the poor oppress'd, the rightful God
Will doom according to your proper code ;
And, bound with chains, such as your victims bore,
Ye shall have ore enough—ay, molten ore !

And ye, whose plotting villanies have brought
The dupes that trusted to a dungeon lot,
Be politic—and cover with disdain
The ills of those who sink beneath the chain.
And ye too, guilty Judges ! do not fail
To vent your execration on the jail ;
In its disgrace corruption 'scapes the light,
And your false verdicts wear the face of right.
And ye, ye Rulers ! ever prompt to shower
Reproach on all obnoxious to your power,
Promote the dungeon—scoff the captive's tear—
'Twill flatter power, and arm your wrath with fear.
Still be it yours, in false alarm or hate,
Subservient to some Chief—some trick of State—
To hurl the wretch to bondage, and repress
All public pity through a venal press,
Pile inculpations on the victim's name
Till fetters seem the merit of his shame.
Alas ! all mankind no harsh counsel need
To fly weak pity as an evil deed—

Long use and vicious Nature have done all
To steel their bosoms to a fellow's fall!
And yet, just Heaven! how grateful to the mind,
To think that bonds are not alone confined
To mere misfortune—but that villains bear
Their galling weight, and sometimes weep their share.
The little knave, with spoil too scant to buy
Respect and suffrage from society,
To the deep glooms of this drear mansion hurl'd,
Leaves richer rogues to prosper in the world.

Here, with a soul of anarchy endued,
The foe of social order and of good—
The scourge of cities, and the plague of kings—
Subverter of authority and things—
The idol of the mob—the rabble chief—
Officious weeper of the public grief,
Who sought to lead fell murder to the throne,
And crown tyrannic systems of his own.

Trampling on moral truth, he sports a creed
To favour bloodshed and defend misdeed :
Cloaks plotting mischief with sophistic rules
That flatter villains and impose on fools :
The mouthing friend of liberty and right,
Who argues justice is abuse of might ;
And plans to perish in one general wreck
All who have wealth, birth, virtue—and a neck.
Caught in the very snare prepared for those
He would have sunk beneath rebellious blows—
He wastes his lungs in impotence of rage
Against the laws—the rulers—and the age :
Proclaims his nation needs must be undone
Since its best freedom and himself are one !—
That nought may now redeem her but the sword
Raised by the mob—but brandish'd at his word ;
While, swelling with mock dignity, he vows,
He still hath might to strip a monarch's brows,
And, spite of chains and scorn, will yet repress
The power of sceptres, and enforce redress :

His hot philippics taunting jailers hear,
Clank their loud keys—and answer with a sneer.

Here the Freebooter of the public way—
Ferocious still, and, spite of fetters, gay—
Jealous that no external marks appear
Of soft contrition, or of coward fear,
He chaunts lewd songs, and waves the brimming cup,
Which ever and anon he drenches up
With toasts to some old paramour, or friend
Who braved the laws, and paid them by his end.
Admiring Ruffians chorus every sound,
Rebuke their babbling chains, and gather round,
While he relates the feats that stamp his name
With all the terror of a brigand's fame :
How oft he balk'd pursuit, ev'n in the face
Of justice led by treachery on his trace :
How oft the mettle of his darling steed
Snatch'd him from rope and ruin by his speed—

And a rude tear still struggles to his eyes
As he details his courser's qualities—
How broke with justice he defies its power
In all its wrath, to blight his mirthful hour ;
And pledges many an oath, that not a sigh
Shall tell the baffled judge he fears to die.
His reckless boasts, with shouts the listeners hail,
Insult the laws, and join with him to rail ;
While with fiend-eye the Deathsman, 'twixt each pause,
Gloats on the group—and smiles with grim applause.

And here the Pilferer, whose less daring soul
Forced him to creep upon the thing he stole—
The foe of day—companion of the night,
Who skulk'd with silence and the muffled light—
Whose fingers, skill'd in subtle sleight, purloin'd
The purse of him, security made blind ;
Vile—sordid—base—no saving traits create
Remotest pity to lament his fate—

'Mid penitential cant his thoughts still shape.
Plans of prevarication and escape ;
Weeping his jeopardy he shrinks with dread
At every shooting bolt, and coming tread—
Fawns on his jailers—and would fain intreat
The meanest favour at their spurning feet.

Here sold by vice, while premature decay
Gnaws the scathed ruins of his youth away,
The broken Gamester, blasted o'er with shame,
Sustains a fate just merit of his fame.
Once, it is said, fair beauty's manly grace
Sat with distinction on his form and face,
While Fortune watch'd him with a favouring eye,
And join'd his hand to rich Prosperity ;
But Ignorance, Presumption, and vain Pride
Poison'd his mind, and cast her gifts aside,
While lawless riot and the anxious game
Broke down his honour, and defaced his frame.

Yea ! view him now, who once impress'd despair
On rival fops—the darling of the fair !
Disease corrodes his body, and dark lines
Mark his blurr'd visage with sinister signs :
A bilious shade work'd by his tainted soul,
Sits like foul reprobation on the whole ;
While from his brow the wicked Night hath torn
Those locks his blighted youth should yet have worn—
Leaving his guilty front exposed and bare,
That all may read a Miscreant written there.
From fellow-knaves he courts admiring praise
By vain narrations of his lavish days,
Boasts of the wealth, the equipage, and train,
Address acquired—his art may win again ;
His debts—his brawls—his foul amours he brags,
And still he apes the fashion—though in rags.
His keen dexterity at cards he shows,
The dice roll all obedient as he throws,
Proving how dupes from ease and comfort hurl'd,
Were doom'd to beg poor pittance of the world.

Yet, though he strives to gloss his guilty tale
With bold unblushing jest, his efforts fail ;
For still accusing thought his bosom rends,
With damning memory of his ruin'd friends :
Their wives—their children—'whelm'd with every ill,
Who curse with bitter tears his practised skill ;
While, writhing in that hell of living fate,
To know himself a villain all must hate,
He finds himself the scorn of every breast,
Shunn'd ev'n by knaves, and cursed by the unblest.

Here a fit home for one whose leprous mind
Is a foul heap of every vice combined,
A mass of turpitude—through which a ray
Of blessed virtue never shot its way.
If justice still hath tardied a decree,
That should suspend him on the gallows tree,
'Tis that dark Cunning marches by his side,
And what his soul can dare his art can hide.

Lavish of bounty to attain his end,
And buy a right to dictate to his friend,
He flatters his weak passions to seduce
His suffering honour to a crooked use :
Appropriates the fruits, and shifts the blame
Upon the easy dupe he sells to shame.
Rich in resource, in stratagem, and wile,
Ready to sneak—to bully—weep or smile :
All scheme and trick—well-guarded—yet profuse
Of fulsome praise, or scurrilous abuse :
The world his only knowledge, and his school,
Where he hath learn'd to seem right wise by rule :
With dextrous shift can hide the untaught thought
By scraps of jumbled books acquired by rote ;
While studied looks and gestures would imply
The frank bold confidence of honesty.
But let the nice observer only read,
And he must needs detect the rogue indeed,
Whose outward smiles but gild the inward knave,
Like blazing scutcheons some opprobrious grave—

Behold the Sharper—the accomplish'd cheat—
Professing dupery—in his trade complete ;
Endued with mind by nature, and by art
Fit for the traffic of guilt's general mart ;
But Fortune balk'd his plots, else wealth and fame
Had deck'd with splendour his successful shame,
And, spite of every caution—every plan
To hide his soul, and make a prey of man—
The fiend betray'd him to the world's disdain,
Tore his fair mask, and bound him to the chain.

Here the Assassin, whose black heart withstood
Nature's soft cries, in thirstiness of blood,
Who, reckless of damnation, drench'd the knife
In the red current of his fellow's life,
And tore the spirit from its fond abode,
To plead against him at the throne of God.
By interest harden'd—by fell hatred fired—
In darkness shrouded—by the fiend inspired,

He in the forest took his secret stand,
And bared the murderous weapon in his hand.
The winds howl'd horror—but his dark intent,
Resisting fear, was still on murder bent :
The waving trees moan'd hollow sighs around,
But yet he stood unshaken at the sound :
The owl, lodged on her nightly perch hard by,
Rung the dark wood with many a boding cry,
Snuff'd promised blood, and flapp'd his heavy wing,
Yet still the wretch felt no repentant sting ;
The distant village cur ne'er ceased to howl—
Sad note of coming death and murder foul—
But, all unmoved, he chid the tardy time
That yet withheld the instant of his crime.
At length the bell toll'd the portentous hour,
Which was to yield the victim to his power :
He listen'd—all was still—gave heed again—
And almost fear'd his ambuscade was vain,
Till a quick distant footstep struck his ear—
He grasp'd the steel—the tread approach'd him near—

'Twas he—the object of his deadly wrath
Who sought his home by the accustom'd path;
To peril blind—and anxious to attain
The group that watch'd his coming—watch'd in vain.
First rallying all his ruthlessness to slay,
The monster sprang from ambush on his prey—
The victim reel'd and struggled—but each blow
Drew from his gaping wounds a crimson flow—
The least a door to death—he fell, and cried,
“ My wife !—my children !—mercy, Heaven !” and died.

'Twas done—the long-concerted crime was done—
Heaven wept a rebel soul—and Satan won.
Glowing with guilt, the murderer eyed with dread
The darkling wood, the blood, the prostrate dead :
Nature seem'd hush'd in horror—not a breath
Broke for a moment o'er the scene of death :
Terror flew o'er the place, and the fell breast
Of this lost wretch heaved painfully oppress'd.

The deed was done !—dark vengeance reap'd its due,
And yet the deed he wish'd were still to do ;
The blood he vow'd to shed reek'd on his hand,
But with glad triumph did his heart expand ?—
No, no !—there came a pang with the dire blow
In dreadful token of eternal woe,
And, in that pause, guilt stamp'd upon his brow
The damned shade which hangs upon it now.
Hell claim'd him for her own—while Heaven, with hate,
Dash'd his lost hopes for ever from her gate—
Conscience awoke, and dinn'd him with her cries,
And shame and gibbets swam before his eyes.
Starting, he seized the corpse, and bore his way
To where the forest darkled ev'n in day :
With crimson'd hands he clear'd the tangled soil,
And scoop'd the secret grave with fearful toil :
While at his side the hidden demon stood,
And smiled, exulting o'er the scene of blood ;
And the cold moon, conceal'd 'neath many a cloud
Of gathering tempests, burst her sable shroud,

And gleam'd at once a light of sombre blue
Upon the murder'd corse of ghastly hue,
Clotted with gore, and dreadful in the clasp
Of dire destruction and the dying gasp :
While the foul night-bird, sudden and amain,
Screech'd a dire requiem o'er the stiffening slain ;
The villain's courage dwindled to dismay,
Panting in fear, his lips essay'd to pray ;
But guilt congeal'd his words, and, at his side,
The fiend peal'd hellish laughter to deride ;
Frantic with horror—harrow'd up with dread—
The ruffian—almost blasted—groan'd, and fled.

Now, bound by chains, the fated wretch desires
Prompt death, in spite of Hell's preparing fires ;
Torment already rages in his breast,
And any change, though Hell itself, were blest ;
On his rack'd mind dread terrors still intrude,
The scaffold—Deathsman—and the multitude—

The signal knell—the execrating cry
Of crowds exulting to behold him die—
No rites—no sepulture—and, what is worse,
A widow's damning tears—an orphan's curse.

Here brutal Jailers, callous as the stones
Of their own dungeons, spurn at captive groans :
With them the voice of pity finds no ear,
Their rugged hearts are proof to every tear ;
While, let harsh tyrants doom what scathe they will,
Without compunction they are ready still ;
And dread must be the pain which power commands,
That finds no aggravation at their hands.

Here licensed Thieves, professors of chicane,
Hover around like vultures o'er the slain ;
From sinking wretches wring the scanty ore,
And flee when heartless trick can drain no more.
Sworn foes to human good—polluted crew !—
Gaunt winter wolves are lambs compared with you,

Who suck the blood of citizens—and fill
The jail with victims, and the earth with ill.

Such is the Prison!—yea, behold the plan
Of earthly justice, dealt by man to man;
Who, lending Heaven all attributes severe,
'Venge on the wretch the future wrath they fear;
Turn fiends to punish error, and too well
Have made terrestrial jails to rival Hell.

Now, round the world, my wandering mind surveys
Those prison piles which tyrants love to raise;
Those dire abodes where sombre terror glooms,
And fated victims find eternal tombs.

O God! what pictures swim before my eyes—
What dismal towers—and walls—and ramparts rise!
Horrific mansions practised under ground,
Wrapt in the shades of tenfold night profound.

Strait loopholes barr'd—and massive iron doors—
Dark winding stairways—fearful corridors—
Deep convict-mines, and stony chambers drear,
On shuddering thought successively appear ;
The convent dungeon—the old castle keep—
The hatchway barr'd to freedom, on the deep—
And all those horrors of tyrannic hate
In jails of Inquisition, and of State—
Keepers—Familiars—Deathsmen—Guards—and all
Who live by woe, and haunt the prison-wall.

The holds of Dionysius, that yet stand
In awful memory on Sicilia's strand—
Rome's vestal tombs Time spares in mournful sign,
Her Castle Angelo—hoar Mamertine—
Byzantium's seven Towers—immurements dread
Fierce Tippoo throng'd, increscent of the dead—
Segovia—Magdeburgh—the dire Bastile—
Those Moorish dungeons captured Christians fill—

Siberia's prison wilds—the fates that lower
O'er Castle Ova, and the English Tower!

With these remember'd, lo! a squalid train
Who pined in durance—perish'd in the chain—
Wept seas of grief, and sunk in slow decay,
Shut out from men and Heaven's all-cheering ray—
With fancy pass in sad succession by,
And sympathy to each consigns a sigh.
Lo! Christ himself is foremost of the band—
The marks of shackles still imprint his hand—
Oh, monster Man! that could not spare the load
Of tyrant fetters, even on thy God!
See, Socrates, succeeding next in train,
Smiles with calm resignation on his chain,
He—whose pure soul best fitted for the sky
Raised him, though pagan, next to deity.
Aristides the just—Phocion the good—
Rome's Seneca, who 'scaped from bonds in blood—

The exiled Ovid, and Pharsalia's bard,
And poor Boëthius, captive sorrows marr'd.
Raised by the thought, behold a martyr'd throng
Of Gothic shades pass mournfully along :
And he of " Lion heart " who felt the power
Of Austria's vengeance in the secret tower ;
The second Richard too, whose bitter life
Forms a dark tale of thralldom and of strife ;
Ill-fated Boleyn, and the beauteous Grey,
And she who pined long captive years away
In fortress-holds—poor Mary !—Scotia's queen,
Firm in life's storm—in martyrdom serene—
Whose fate shall draw soft pity's tribute tears—
As long as record marks a tale of years.
A Strafford—Latimer—a Raleigh—More—
And other victims of old Britain's shore.
Lo ! Galileo rises next to sight,
Who paid in prison-shades truth's blissful light ;
And he who wasted life's embitter'd hours
With lonely sorrow in Saint Margaret's Towers—

The Youth of Iron Mask,—whose mystery lies
Still in the doubtful vague of wild surmise;
And here too, Ugolino, in despair,
Eyes his devoted boys with frantic glare,
And as he marks death's livid signs that trace
Destruction's fast approach to the fallen face,
The cry for bread hath ceased—and in his breast
The heart—the heart—thought shudders at the rest.
And Ivan, hapless prince !—fell power decreed
To sink immured, till reeking murder freed ;
The daring Trenck, whose courage could sustain
Long years of darkness and a ponderous chain ;
And he who struck on the Italian lyre
The dreadful theme all ages must admire—
The energetic Dante !—at his side
Behold Camoens, Lusitania's pride ;
And Tasso, my delight ! who lived to wail
His frantic love and vigils in the jail ;
And my Cervantes, whose light spirit rose
In playful mockery of his prison woes,

And eased his weary fether to recite
The tale of old La Mancha's crazy knight.
And he—the hapless youth— who wildly sung
His untaught numbers in my native tongue,
The persecuted Savage—left to die
A friendless outcast in obscurity.

Immortal captives thus, of every age,
Pass in review, and in their turn engage,
Arming my heart with fortitude to bear
A lot that worth and merit often share.
When life no more shall flutter in the vein,
And anguish cease to mark this fever'd brain,
Swept with the things gone by, to that abyss
Where human sorrows find last glad release—
I too may be remember'd—and my fate
Awaken Sympathy, albeit too late.
The pensive stranger, when the sod shall rest
In sullen stillness on my coffin'd breast,

May view these walls with interest, and peruse
Each trace they bear of my dejected muse ;
And as he scans, perchance may yield a tear
In mournful memory o'er my dungeon bier ;
And, while he wipes the tender drop away,
With faltering accents from his bosom, say :—
“ Here finds, at last, a refuge from despair,
“ One born to sorrow, and condemn'd to care ;
“ Kind was his heart, but destiny decreed
“ At every pore that fated heart should bleed ;
“ Proud was his spirit—but Oppression's yoke
“ Press'd on his youth, until that spirit broke ;
“ With warm affections did his bosom burn,
“ But these were doom'd to meet with no return :
“ His soul too independent—sense too keen,
“ To woo the world, and grovel with the mean,
“ Was watch'd by mankind with a jealous eye,
“ O'erwhelm'd with wrongs, and crush'd by calumny ;
“ But genius warm'd him—and bright honour still
“ Lived in his breast in spite of every ill—

“ Sustain’d his mind in ruin and in pain,
“ Shamed persecution, and disgraced its chain.”
And, while soft feeling whispers an “ All hail ! ”
To my sad ashes, as he weeps the tale,
My ghost shall catch the boon—and gliding by,
Bless his kind pity—and breathe back the sigh.

VIGIL FIFTH.

NIGHT waxeth old—her still repose how dread !
As she advances, Nature slumbers dead ;
No sound or movement stirs—the flaring strife
Of yon faint lamp alone speaks outward life.
Awake, as in the charnel-house of death,
I chide my pulse, and start at my own breath,
As if each throb and heaving of my breast
Were crime against the universal rest.

Oh ! man's pre-eminence, where—where art thou
With thy advantage o'er mere matter now ?
What serves thy bright intelligence of mind,
When in the prison's narrow space confined ?

It there, alas ! is but an inward foe
Which frets the sense with pang of conscious woe.
What boots acquirement ?—and of what avail
Are these young limbs inactive in the jail ?
Dead, I exist—sepultured ere I die—
Cramp'd in each power—and thrown forgotten by.

Unnumber'd forms of life the forest fill,
Burrow in earth, or range the desert hill :
These shoal the sea—those wing the giddy air
All nature stirring with their busy care ;
But mid this general bustle round the ball,
Man's active energies outstrip them all :
Ambition—gain—or love of science probe
His heart in turns, and drive him o'er the globe :
Enlarge his thought, till earth's extended face
For his vast mind yields insufficient space ;
While here inert I lie, bold crowds explore
With restless enterprize Earth's various shore—

Braving the blast, in furr'd pelisse they fly
On the swift sledge, beneath a northern sky ;
Or in proud palanquins maintain their way
Beneath the torrid Zone's all-scorching ray ;
Or wafted onward by the bellying sail,
They ride the furrow'd deep before the gale :
Or pace the sphere on whirling wheels—nay dare
On vapour borne, to navigate the air.
Each field betrays their labours of the soil,
The city echoes to their various toil,
Their works of art with active nature vie,
And commerce marks throughout their industry.
With studious care, ev'n in this midnight hour,
Grey Science watches on the dizzy tower,
Lifts contemplation through the aching eye
Amid the blazing wonders of the sky,
Builds systems wild—forms scientific schemes,
And gives the name of Wisdom to vain dreams.
The Lover, too, now flies a sleepless bed
To thread the lonely streets with silent tread,

Steals to the casement of his worship bright,
To woo with plaintive serenades of night.
While prone on earth the wakeful Soldier lies,
Impatient for the fight at dawn's first rise,
Plans feats of valour in the coming fray,
And flatters hope with a victorious day.
Pacing the deck, to guard from rock or foe,
The pensive Mariner treads to and fro,
Leans in fond land-dreams o'er the vessel's side,
Soothed by hoarse music of the lashing tide.
But mid the stir which animates the whole
Of earth's revolving centre to the pole,
From her arena swept—reft from each tie—
Alas! my ruin'd youth—what—what am I?—
A sear'd leaf shaken from the public tree!—
A lonely drop dash'd from life's rolling sea!—
An atom to creation lost—a flower
Pluck'd from the stem, and crush'd before its hour—
A bark cast on the shoal, which day by day
Yields to the stealing ravage of decay!

Yea ! here my voyage ends—and my last groan
Shall heave this breast unsoothed—unheard—alone :
At once from earth, and tender memory swept,
As if I ne'er had been—had never wept ;
No feeling friend to tend my dying bed,
Pray at my side, and pillow my sick head.
Fate's larum-watch through this sad cell will beat
The awful signal of my winding sheet ;
Heaven's messenger, the herald bird of death,
Will flap yon casement for my parting breath ;
And the dread rattle of lost life betray
The broken spirit wing'd upon its way ;
But who will read these warnings ?—who receive
The last sad sigh my ebbing soul shall heave ?—
Who close these heavy lids as death's fix'd glare
Shall seek Alicia in the shapeless air ?—
What friend obedient to my last request
Will to her bear this image at my breast ?—
Alas ! rude strangers heedlessly will lay
My friendless ashes in their house of clay ;

But not one tear-drop from a mortal eye
Hail my sad transit to eternity.
And yet, it must not be—what ! finish here
All the bright prospects of my young career ?
Untimely from the book of life effaced,
Before my hand one lasting mark hath traced ?
Were then my energies bestow'd in vain,
And hath my soul no strength to conquer pain ?
No ! spite of thralldom and my fever'd bed,
Futurity still hovers o'er my head :
Bless'd hope awakening whispers I may see
These doors laid ope to liberty and me,
And the fair Earth, with all her seas and skies,
Smiles with delightful promise to my eyes.
Oh, it were sad ! the springing flower should fade
Before it shone in full-blown bloom array'd—
That blight should nip the fruit upon the tree,
Before it reach to ripe maturity—
I, too, must live my season—and like them,
Flourish my hour upon life's vernal stem.

Oh ! I have many a sweet to cull before
The spring of life—youth's flowery day—is o'er ;
I yet may bask in favouring beauty's smile,
And prove a woman's love not always guile ;
I still may rise to shine in Fortune's train,
And find the friend I yet have sought in vain.
Through dark futurity's impervious night
Solicitude would fain extend the sight,
And catch some knowledge of my fate that lies
Wrapp'd in the lap of the dark destinies ;
But ah ! I recognize my early heart,
That will not—cannot play a plodding part :
It cries for aliment to feed its fires,
Pines for adventures—sickens with desires :
The ancient ardour yet glows in the brain,
My blood still scorns to slumber in the vein :
'Tis a bold stream ! whose crimson currents rush
Through all my being with impetuous gush,
In fearful token that this life must be
Still in extremes of strife and misery.

Like a vast map unfolded to mine eyes,
The whole wide universe before me lies ;
But where to rest my thought, or shape my way,
No inward hopes—no fair allurements say ;
For me 'tis all alike—one cheerless round
Without a choice of path, or refuge ground.
That paradise of life—the pleasures sweet
Of ample competence and calm retreat,
With which poor mortals only can possess
The treasure rare of hermit happiness,
Must ne'er be known to one ordain'd to roam
In search of independence and a home.

Forced, like the wandering Israelite, to steer
A ceaseless pilgrimage around the sphere,
Sighing for each blest cabin that I see,
Yearning for rest, my nature still must flee :
Alas ! I sadden with prophetic pain
To think what waits, perchance, beyond the chain.

Where black disease with annual torrents lies,
Where pestilence with dire ophthalmia flies;
Where hot siroccos parch, and lightnings glow,
Where earthquakes shake, and hurricanos blow :
Where wild tornados burst, and monsoons sweep
The boisterous surges of the foaming deep :
Where forests vast, coeval with old Time,
Shade the black savage of the torrid clime :
Or 'neath the furthest pole, where the glad ray
Of genial sunshine never warm'd the day :
Where piercing blasts of endless winter roar,
And icebergs bind the desolated shore :
Where snows eternal in dark volumes driven,
Blanch the dire waste, and mask the face of Heaven,
While, glowing in the wilderness of white,
Aurora Borealis plays her light—
There doom'd perchance to waste youth's blighted years,
Remote from all fond early use endears,
A vernal spring—a temperate sky serene—
Refreshing zephyrs—winters mildly green—

Must all be changed for nature in a guise,
Strange to my heart—and foreign to mine eyes.
Where the dark Danube shows his whisker'd ranks
In furry legions on his martial banks :
Where the brave Pollack wields his pennon'd lance,
Or Wolga's rugged sons in hordes advance :
Where Frederic's school prepares for deeds of war
The active Hullan and the fierce Hussar :
Or the grey mountains of Gustavus yield
Bold yellow-visaged veterans for the field :
Where Old Castile trains her Guerilla bands
In mountain gorges of her viny lands :
Or scientific Seine exulting shows
Her tried battalions, and the spoils of foes—
A people seam'd with scars—chiefs ne'er surpass'd,
And trophies piled by him who sleeps at last ;
Or where Britannia's farthest cannon roars
With thundering triumph on her tribute shores,
And Ganges rears swarth sepoy, who betray
Their native Rajahs for a hireling pay :

Or where dread Cortes and Pizarro bore
The flag of Spain, and hoisted it in gore :
Or the haught Ottoman exerts command
O'er many a turban'd host of Eastern land :
Or Persia's power exhibits to the eye
Her rainbow throng of sumptuous cavalry—
There, in the brunt of warfare and affray,
Bold enterprise must carve my dubious way,
Compell'd to seek the distant scene of strife,
To stake 'gainst fortune all we prize in life.

How cursed is he the Fates condemn to rove
From all he loves—from all he e'er must love—
Unblest with power and fortune to command
Repose and honours in his native land :
Who still must wing sighs homeward as he draws
His sword defensive of a foreign cause :
Who, mid the stranger's ranks embattled, yet
Must hail his native standard with regret,

Its least reverses from his heart bemoan,
And still regard its laurels as his own—
This I have known—and such I fear must be
The fate which waits me in futurity.

Proud empty medals!—baubles of the breast!—
How much ye cost me, let this sigh attest.
Vain was I of thy glitter—sought to gain
By deeds of peril, hardship, and of pain—
Now, princely recompense! behold ye mine,
How bright in mockery of the past ye shine!
Ensigns of human folly!—toys to snare
The grown-up child to danger, toil, and care.
How weak is man!—prone by a strange disease
To languish after paltry gauds like these,
Prides in a badge which marks him an apt slave,
And for an idle gewgaw dares the grave.
Yet, dear Insignias—cherish'd still—'tis you
Point me the path ambition must pursue—

A path which leads to danger, and I fear
The brief conclusion of a fate so drear.
Wreck'd on the wave, or stretch'd upon the field,
My name unmark'd—my funeral knell unpeal'd—
Perchance, these captive limbs are doom'd at last
To gorge the sea-bird—yield the wolf repast—
No stone to honour my remains, and tell
My hapless fate—how young—how firm I fell ;
No friend, to hail with peace my mouldering clay,
And lend a hand to pluck the weeds away,
Or plant one tribute flower, in memory dear,
Blest with a sigh—and water'd with a tear.

Or spared to wander home in days of age
After long years of weary pilgrimage,
With Care's mementos, and the furrow'd trace
Of many a trial graven on my face,
My frame decay'd by time and hardships rude,
Bent o'er the staff of frail decrepitude—

Each trait obscured beneath Time's hoary guise —
I yet may stand before Alicia's eyes;
And view that being whose blest thought hath been
My constant worship, ere I quit the scene;
Mark every fading change—those notes that grow
Like chronicles upon dim Age's brow;
The stooping form, by eld's dread pressure bent,
The cold fix'd orb, where youth's last fire is spent;
The sallying veins, where sluggish life-blood creeps,
Palsies that shake, where ancient ardour sleeps;
Those beams of sweet serenity, that play
Round Virtue's face e'en to the latest day;
Like flowers that bloom upon a crumbling wall,
As if to deck the ruin ere its fall.

O tyrant Nature! may I then behold
The idol of my heart, infirm and old,
Her angel charms by wrinkled years despoil'd,
And matron sternness gloom—where love once smiled?

No !—feeding fancy, in despite of truth,
I yet would lend her every charm of youth ;
Would contemplate with sighs the track of years,
And muse upon each silver'd lock with tears,
Seek each remember'd grace defaced or gone,
And hail the grave's approaches with a groan.
Or I may live to see her beauteous head
Laid with the congregation of the dead ;
Behold the sod eternally enfold
Her I prized more than pleasure, health, or gold ;
May steep the clay in Sorrow's trickling tide
Till Death extend me slumbering at her side.
Oh, rather it were mine to find her poor,
Fallen from high splendour to a state obscure :
That I might fly with succour, and convey
To her sad soul sweet Comfort's blissful ray,
Might soothe the griefs of age, and in the end
Prove her first early love—her latest friend.
Then life were worth a struggle—hope like this
Might crown each moment of my days with bliss : ~

But vain the wish !—for I must never know
Wealth's dearest power to succour other's woe,
And the kind will—the bountiful desire—
Deep in the breast, must still unblest expire.

Oh, Poverty !—thy griping hand doth bind
A chain on all warm feelings of the mind.
The noblest spirits writhe beneath thy rod,
Turn'd, heart and talent, to mere beasts of load ;
Lash'd into sordid things—compell'd to pass
Through life confounded with the vulgar mass—
Wretched with all the worth that may belong
To human nature—jewels in the throng.
Thy least dread aspect, with thy train of ills,
Convey an inward sentiment which chills ;
While thy temptations—and thy state forlorn
Is Virtue's terror—and all mankind's scorn.
But thou, O Independence ! to the heart
What joy doth not thy faintest glimpse impart ?

Music with all her potency can frame
No sound to equal thy enchanting name.
Thou!—thou alone! canst reconcile us here,
And make our earth a habitable sphere.
Thou lightest up a lamp, whose cheering ray
Sheds a bright gladness o'er life's rugged way.
Soft Comfort yields her blessing to thy claim.
Thou savest cheeks from the hot blush of shame :
'Tis thine to strew soft flowers beneath our tread,
And purify the air around our head :
To kindle confidence, and plant the breast
With seeds of calm felicity and rest.
Oh yes! bright Nymph! the blest awards that wait,
In blind attendance on thy happy state,
Compel all mankind to adore in thee
The Genius of glad joy—peace—liberty!

Mark the Dependant, whose faint smiles would hide
The constant anguish of his suffering pride—

Whose heart, still coveting thy fond embrace,
Is fain to fold hope's phantom in thy place :
To insult he must bow a patient head,
And steep'd in sorrow taste his bitter bread :
Check the fine impulse tender sense inspires,
And stifle the warm bosom's secret fires :
Yield to the fools he cannot but despise,
And clothe high spirit in a meek disguise.

Oh, Fate ! who still hast smote me sore, if thou
Hast doom'd that Age shall write upon my brow,
Snatch me from such a destiny—or here
Give me at once in silence to the bier !
O God !—could this aspiring soul descend
Beneath some proud protector's will to bend ?—
Yield me to all his caprice, and obey
What e'en his very look would seem to say ?—
Upon his promises my prospects pile,
Quake at his frown, and cringe to catch a smile ?

No !—rather heap these walls about my head,
Till my last fondest dreams in life are fled,
Till all the battle of the mind be o'er,
And human life can please, or plague, no more;
Or lend me force to fly the world, and quell
Ambition's fond desires, that inward swell;
Content with humble peace and honest toil
To wrest a simple pittance from the soil.
Where waves, unrippled by the keel, beat o'er
The untrod beach of some sequester'd shore,
Yea ! give me but a hut, where surges lull,
And the cliffs echo to the plaintive gull :
Where the loud voice of mirth and riot rude
Ne'er broke the sabbath of this solitude.
Where the sad plover rings the echoing wild,
And flowers exhale their odours undespoil'd :
Where the lone cuckoo steals the secret nest,
And the shy hare finds unmolested rest—
Secure in safe asylum on a sod
The erring herd, or hunter, never trod :—

There let my chimney reek through sparkling spray—
Sole sign of habitation on the bay—
By day my beacon—and my lattice light
The welcome pharos to my skiff at night.
An ample garden, rich in plants and flowers,
To exercise me in my leisure hours.
Garb me in peasant's weeds, or hermit gown,
And on low rushes lay my slumbers down.
Let no vain splendour my poor cot adorn,
Enough the dish of wood—the cup of horn.
Shade my light casement from the heats of noon,
By leafy tendrils wreathed in green festoon,
And, breathing incense round my boltless door,
Entwine my walls with creeping jasmine o'er.
One faithful dog be partner of my hearth—
That I may still possess a friend on earth.
The housewife's feline favorite, too; might dwell
A peaceful inmate of my hermit cell;
And, in her sage antipathy to roam,
Teach me to prize tranquillity and home.

With fruits and herbs my humble board be dress'd—
A sumptuous banquet, were Content my guest !
And give me books, that hungry Thought may find
Delightful aliment to feed the mind :
Still first the sacred Scriptures—ever yet
Blest task and comfort of the anchoret.
And that dread monitor of time—a glass,
To tell upon the moments as they pass.
My pen—my flute—and pencil—to defeat
Their gloomy spleen when lingering in retreat.
A skull, to teach me through the pensive eye
The dreadful lesson of mortality ;
And still this portrait—comrade of my breast—
To warm my thought with tender memories blest.
Be this the sum of all my earthly store,
Rash—rash are wishes when they covet more !
And let me breathe all guiltless of offence,
In simple patriarchal innocence,
A lone recluse, far from all human eye,
Contented live—and in contentment die.

I ask no mourners, borrowing the false tear,
To weep in formal mockery round my bier ;
I ask no monument, in thirst of fame,
'Mid silent deserts to belie my name ;
But held alone, within the angels' ken,
Be my sequester'd grave conceal'd from men.
Let some sad willow mark my secret tomb,
Where briar and harebells blend their sweet perfume,
And while lone musing spreads her downy wing,
Let Philomel my requiescat sing.

Dissolve, fond vision !—hence thou flattering train
Of sweet illusions from my dreaming brain :—
On earth's whole space there resteth not a shed
Where quiet offers refuge to my head ;
For did I seek the blessings of repose
On Afric's burning sands—Siberia's snows—
Were I to choose some isle of farthest seas,
Or lose me in wild Alps, or Pyrenees—

Trouble would still assail me with regret,
And some malignant villain find me yet—
Would still betray this soul—unguarded—warm—
And torture Malice to devise me harm.
All-gracious Heaven ! what hath my mind not borne
From creatures—objects of my deepest scorn ?—
Owns my sad heart one chord to feeling tuned,
Which canker'd Mischief hath not sought to wound ?—
A single virtue worthy of my pride,
Which venom'd Enmity hath not belied ?—
Yes !—fiends in human shape have sought to tear
My heart's warm gladness, till all 's winter there ;
And such will still blast rising hope—and wage
War on my wanderings—on my hermitage.
Oh ! that my soul were rude and unrefined,
Enslaved to matter, like the common mind :
That tender Sensibility's bright chain
Had never bound me to eternal pain ;
So, undisturb'd, I might have crawl'd along
The beaten track of the dull-plodding throng,

Unworthy of remark—content to be
With man, as is the rain-drop to the sea—
One of those human things, whose heads and hearts
Spread over Earth's wide face like envious warts
Upon fair Beauty's cheek :—flesh that doth find
Its way from Nature's mint unstamp'd with mind,
To sneak through human life—do dirty deeds—
Live to hatch harm, and die to fatten weeds.
Oh !—then my heart, adhering to the clay,
To poignant feeling had not fallen a prey ;
Wealth had been every human good to me,
Sole wish—sole god of my idolatry—
My love had been myself—my best delight,
Servile indulgence to low appetite.
The man, endued with an exalted mind,
Whom feeling fired—to selfish interest blind—
Who, sway'd by impulse of the generous heart,
Dared from the common current to depart,
Had seem'd to my uncharitable eyes
An object of suspicion and surprise :

Yea—each infraction of my narrow rule
Had been the sign of madman, knave, or fool.
Then—then—these eyes had never waked to wail,
I had not droop'd a captive in the jail :
Fancy had set upon my mind no mark—
My spirit had been cold—my bosom dark :
Or glimmer'd only with sufficient light
To hug the world, and keep self-interest right ;
While, leagued 'gainst worth and genius, I had been
All instinct, rote, and rule—a man machine.

Yet, Fancy, brilliant with celestial fire,
Blest is the soul thy rays divine inspire !—
Exalting matter in its grovelling course
To glow all life, infused with mental force—
'Tis thine, like day's broad orb, Heaven's fount of light,
Vile dust to vivify—chase hideous night—
Shoot gleams that gild, that fructify, and charm,
And draw fond tears from the glad breast they warm ;

The heart holds winter that feels not thy ray—
'Tis chaos where thy lightnings will not play :
Man is a stagnant slough of sordid thought,
An abject jar of earth—a thing of nought—
Unless thy animating power uprouse
The slumbering spirit in its charnel-house.

Oh ! what is life divested of thy dreams ?—
What Heaven itself, unbrighten'd with thy beams ?—
What all our joys—dissected by the eye
Of dull dispassionate philosophy ?—
The vain chimeras of an idle trance—
The giddy changes of a frantic dance—
A heavy formula—a funeral rite—
Begun in cradles—closed in church-yard night !
Or what this world to him whose vacant mind
Takes up life's toys on trust, nor looks behind ?—
Whose callow thoughts ignoble, neither know
Reason's cold truths, nor Fancy's blissful glow ?

A mortal round for fools to eat and drink,
Sleep, dance, or riot—any thing but think :
Where wealth, and birth, and equipage, and place,
Give human monsters every angel grace—
Enforce respect and homage—and can buy
The joys of sense, and servile flattery.
But where is that voluptuous tinge of light ?—
The notion gilded with a halo bright ?—
Those blissful shapes ideal, that still seem
The living vision of Thought's waking dream ?—
Those working energies of soul, that raise
The breast with secret transport, till the blaze
Of inspiration kindles all the frame,
While phoenix Genius flutters in the flame ?
Where is the spell which hangs upon the eye,
The ear, the touch, hope, heart, and memory
Of him whose soul beyond the dust can rise,
And soar on Fancy's pinion to the skies ?—
Where is the inward artist that can dress
All beauteous nature with new loveliness ?—

Clothes objects in her own peculiar guise—
Unknown—invisible to vulgar eyes ?—
Beholds details confess'd to her alone,
And makes this world—a world in all her own ?
Where are those sparks of sympathy divine
She fondly kindles at the poet's line ?—
The forceful charm the painter can impart
To the warm child of Fancy's glowing heart ?
Where the delight which music can convey
To that blest soul where Fancy holds a sway ?
Dead to this second life, the major crowd
Lost to her smiles, creep to their common shroud,
Things of mere instinct, sullied by the brute,
To whom all Fancy's eloquence is mute ;
For choice of favour far from vulgar height,
The splendid nymph wings her transcendant flight.
Yet—yet how oft blind petulance laments :
The fond vain dreams with which her power torments,
Cursing each smiling image which she shows
Of happiest bliss, as if to mock my woes.

Still what were I without her ?—what were life
But a free offering to the friendly knife ?
Nought could compensate for the curse of breath—
Death were a paradise—and life were death.
Ah ! who would wreath fair flowers about my chain,
Gild my rude bars, and soothe the mental pain ?—
Lift me beyond these walls, and waft my soul
Unbound by manacles, from pole to pole ?—
Yea ! what would ease the dragging tedium here,
And kindle thoughts to charm, and hopes to cheer ?—
Life like a mouldering volume on the shelf
Would sink to dust imprison'd in itself,
And the dull mind, drown'd in the torpid gloom
Of self-monotony, had found its tomb.
But oh ! bright Fancy woos my spirit well,
Smiles through my tears, and revels in my cell :
With busy hand moves her phantasmas bright
In throng'd succession o'er my mental sight,
Imparting feelings so divinely blest,
I would not change them for a monarch's breast.

Oft doth she lead the mind enraptured through
Those flowery fields her poesy opes to few ;
Or, wrapt in revery, transports me back
On hoary History's eventful track ;
Teaching the laden spirit to inter
The thoughts of present in the things that were ;
And when I sigh at every step to find
Crime staining still the records of mankind,
While truth unmasks the hero and the sage,
And shows their pedant folly—maddening rage—
Transform'd by party's panegyric pen
To virtues more allied to gods than men—
Swift to the rescue, jealous Fancy, fain
To snatch reflection from the thought of pain,
Soon bears me far from Earth's sad speck of care,
To revel in her mansions of the air.
On daring wing she guides the mind to climb—
E'en to the limits of her flight sublime—
Plants me at Heaven's high throne, where my rapt eye
Skims the bright fields of immortality :

Shows 'neath my feet stupendous systems roll
Their course eternal, doom'd to know no goal ;
Unveils the forge of lightning, and Heaven's stores
Of blazing meteors—the bright fount that pours
The torrent light—the potent chains that bind
The surging ocean, and the warring wind—
The secrets of attraction, and the source
Where beauteous motion renovates its force :
First matters matrix, and the springs of time—
The Fates rewarding good—avenging crime :
Shows me blest myriads on light pinions fly,
With busy cares around the circling sky—
Spirits of purity—ordain'd to steer
A constant flight of joy around the sphere :
To watch the vast machine, and still repair
The ravage of decay through earth and air,
To guide the path of worlds o'er boundless space,
And note that every atom fills its place.

Through awful regions of revolving clouds
I fly in concert with these cherub crowds :
Dip in the blending colours of the bow,
And wade o'er realms of hail, and worlds of snow :
Soar over flaming globes, and closely pry
E'en to great Nature's inmost mystery ;
Till Fancy's power effaces from the mind
That I am but a thing of human kind,
So gross in substance, that I may not crawl
Beyond the narrow confines of this wall.

And oft in that still hour, when yonder light
Sinks in the lamp, and ceases to burn bright,
Flickering a dread memento of decay,
To dark extinction stealing slow away ;
While Incubus, on his pale phantom steed,
Rides tortured Sleep with unadvancing speed ;
Then dreams platonic, and a febrile train
Of rosicrucian visions dupe the brain ;

Till peopled round with genii and with sprites—
The fond companions of my sleepless nights—
I lie in fond delirium lock'd—and hold
With the cabal communion 'uncontroll'd.
From the far spheres fantastic shapes descend,
Glide through my cell, and throng about their friend,
Whispering such things, as make my spirit sit
Impatient of the mould which prisons it.
Smiling at human grief, they wipe away
The trace where tears have trickled in the day,
And murmur thus:—"Life's but a dark short night
Which ushers in a dawn of endless light:
"The longest sorrow feeble mortals feel
"Marks less than nothing on Time's rolling wheel:
"Their fragile joys—their unimportant grief—
"Amount but to the rustling of a leaf:
"The sigh of transient zephyrs as they pass,
"A feather's flight—a waving blade of grass:
"Wait but a little, and thou too shalt be,
"Free, air-borne, pure, and sorrowless as we."

And oft they serenade my trance-struck mind
With secret music of unearthly kind,
In strains so low—so exquisitely sweet,
My heart enraptured scarcely dares to beat ;
And oft too those ærial guests put on
The traits of objects, cherish'd still, though gone—
Aping their wonted gestures as they pass
Before my view like shadows in a glass,
And smile as I an eager hand extend,
To catch each phantom-likeness of a friend.
And I have known my sportive spirits wear
The touching semblance of some once-loved fair ;
With frolic finger menace me, and try
A thousand freaks to fascinate the eye,
Waving the floating tress, with wanton play,
Till, blending with the air, they shrunk away.
Nay, they have sought ere now, alas ! to storm
My troubled breast in my Alicia's form,
While I have watch'd the vision—yea ! have gazed
Till the fix'd organs of my sight were glazed—

Till my hot brain in fond distraction turn'd,
And every particle of being burn'd.
That brow; the seat of dignity and sense,
An alabaster tower of innocence—
That eyebrow, pencil'd from Madona's face—
That perfect nose—fair master-piece of grace—
That cheek of healthy pale—where feelings roll
A flush of sensibility and soul—
Those lips of double rubies, that between
Show pearls of pure voluptuousness within,
That open with a word a portal bright
To music of most eloquent delight;—
Those eyes of ebon black, where nobly shine
The spirit of intelligence divine,
Fringed with long lashes, whose relief doth show
More bright the liquid wonders shrined below,
Where Love might light his torch, and sceptics find
Excuse to banish heaven from the mind;—
Locks dark as raven's plumes, that richly flow
Around a neck that mocks heath-bedded snow—

That form whose shape the chisel would defy,
Moved like a charm with airy dignity—
All—all were recognised—each trait—each line
As stamp'd eternal on this soul of mine,
Till each strain'd sinew to its utmost strung,
In frenzied transport from my couch I sprung
To fold the image in my wild embrace—
Ah! frantic dream!—I clasp'd the empty space.

And oft, obscured in midnight's tenfold gloom,
Bent like dumb Misery o'er Hope's ruin'd tomb
In mystery crouch'd—enveloped round with dread,
Hid in his huddled knees his drooping head,
Absorb'd in sullen thought, and lowering spleen,
I've mark'd a being of gigantic mien,
Dishevell'd—haggard—wrapt in black array—
'Twas my ill Genius watching for his prey!
Who eyed the progress of the livid foe
That coursed my fever'd arteries to and fro,

Pining that fate retarded a decree,
That should release him from a wretch like me.

Ungracious Spirit ! thou hast play'd most foul
With my young fate, and unsuspecting soul !
Thou foundest me a creature fond and warm,
My mind romantic—innocent of harm ;
In love with life, and rock'd with visions rare,
Fresh with young health—Alicia call'd me fair.
Now view thy work—see, what thy hate hath done !
Breathes there a sadder wretch beneath the sun ?
With vain ambition didst thou bait the toil,
And ledd'st my steps where fatal pleasures smile,
Didst practise on my vanity—and gave
My hopes and best attachments to the grave ;
Surrounded'st me with friends—ay ! ay ! with friends !
Who made my heart subservient to their ends,
Broke it beneath their villany—and fled
That hour the tempest burst upon my head.

And I have seen a form—transcendent bright,
Light as the breath of flowers—all heavenly white,
Deck'd with fresh garlands fair—and in her hand
The glass of Hope—and Fancy's fairy wand.
All golden were her locks—and in her face
A nameless cast of tenderness and grace ;
She floated o'er my slumbers as I lay,
Or shaped herself to little suns, whose ray
Shone with bright hues of Iris—so divine,
Mine eyes could scarcely brook, yet sought their shine.
It was my better Angel !—that remains
Friend of my soul, in spite of all my chains ;
She yet sustains me—fortifies the breast,
And feeds the mind with consolation blest.
And might gay joy, as in sweet times gone by,
Revive the lamp of gladness in mine eye,
Still would she love to trim the cheerful light,
And hiss her hideous rival into flight.
But joy doth rally round the broken heart
With idle mockery, and with fruitless art,

Hanging her smiles, where deep regret doth burn,
Like empty baubles on a funeral urn.
Or, should the mind diseased, obtain a gleam
Of trembling hope, and warm to Fancy's dream,
These welcome moments are full rare and brief,
Care stealeth to her covert like a thief,
Sweeps the fleet vision of delight away,
And keeps redoubled watch upon her prey.
And I have seen the people of the tomb,
Who court the place of solitude and gloom,
Who 'neath the moon's cold melancholy beam
Haunt the lone margin of the silent stream ;
Or where the murderer's sanguinary knife
Robb'd the benighted traveller of life ;
Or in the ruin'd castle's dismal tower
Patrole, with noiseless step, the midnight hour ;
Who strike the triple knock—sound the lone bell,
And floating notes of solemn music swell.

Yea ! I have dealt with all that Fancy's child
Can frame of supernatural and wild—
Cherub and shadow—goblins—wizards—sprites—
All, all in which a heated mind delights ;
Embraced each bold conception, foul or fair,
The brain can shape in earth—sky—sea, or air.
For oh ! I have a soul that scorns to stay
Inactive in its narrow house of clay,
For ever ranging—and with power endued
To make a peopled world of solitude.
Her quick susceptibilities torment
Her self-repose—and wear her tenement ;
For ne'er did hint to sentiment appeal
To this warm heart in vain—all prompt to feel :
E'en things too trivial for the common note
Oft prove to me a book of busy thought ;
The superstitious dread which silence brings,
The terror shed, where darkness spreads her wings ;
The solemn shade that wraps the midnight hour,
And the still aspect of sleep's deathlike power,

The dread in echo—awe no less profound
In a mere whisper—the appalling sound
Of breathing self alone!—the fear sublime
Which lifts the stiffening hair at tales of crime.
Sad twilight glooming o'er the death of day,
The drear idea waken'd by decay—
A pause—the sinking taper—dying fire—
And all whose thought a terror can inspire
Are in their utmost potency confess'd,
By the keen sense which trembles in my breast.

And Melancholy's agents that control
The softer feelings, subjugate my soul.
Sweet pathos in a page—a touching thought
Express'd on canvas—or in sculpture wrought;
The soul in certain sounds—the sombre print
Of gloomy sadness, bodied in a tint;
The mournful charm in a dejected eye—
The secret passion whisper'd in a sigh—

The look—the gesture—manner—or a tone
Which sensibility in woe puts on ;
That contemplative spirit—holy cast
Which cleaves to age—and hovers o'er the past ;
The pensive look of distance—the sad gloom
Which gathers over ruins—wraps the tomb ;
The wind's low hollow moan—rain-drops that fall
With tearful trickle from the hoary wall ;
The waving of a weed—that awful power
Which speaks in the sear'd leaf and wither'd flower ;
The murmuring rush of waters—the tired flight
Of lone birds bearing home—the far dim light—
The herd's shrill whistle, and the watch-dog's bark,
The twinkling stars of eve—the landscape dark ;—
Nay, all whose essence holds a force to win
A sigh from keenest feeling, tells within.

Oh ! that the body like the soul could rise
And track Imagination when she flies,

Soar on the viewless air, and break away
Through barring elements to brighter day !
And yet how soothing is this thought with me,
That still my better half—the Mind—is free ?
She scoffs at tyranny—contemns the chain,—
And mocks the strength of prisons to detain.
Rapid as light, and wild as Ocean's wind,
She leaves her coil of matter here behind,
O'er seas, and isles, and continents, to stray
With Memory the companion of her way ;
Bringing at will all nature to her sight,
She skims her verdant surface with delight,
Dissolves at once these walls, and on mine eyes
Blest panoramas in their place arise.

Far hills of misty blue, and gentle waves
That dash some desert strand's lone coral caves ;
Meandering streams, that roll their tides away
Where distant objects in pale tints decay ;

Low shepherds' cots, whose yellow thatches rise
Where Agriculture smiles in varied dyes ;
The dewy lawn—the flower-bespangled mead,
Where peasants bask, and flocks disporting feed ;
Trim leafy hedge-rows—lakes where islets green
Peep out and smile, with gliding boats between ;
Romantic springs—where wandering cattle drink,
And water-lilies deck the crystal brink ;
The sylvan dance beneath umbrageous trees,
Summer's light clouds, that flit before the breeze ;
The rising sun which opes the laughing day,
And drives the hag of night in tears away—
Lengthens the shadows—gems the scented thorn,
And tips with yellow gold the waving corn ;
The purple radiance of the blushing west
When Day's bright planet sinks upon his breast ;
The rich refractions that enchanting stream
From objects favour'd with his parting beam,
And all warm admiration can applaud,
In the superb fidelity of Claude.

Or, soaring to the grand—mine eyes behold
Beauties in nature more sublimely bold,
Huge mountains rude, where awful terrors frown,
And foaming cataracts come thundering down ;
Brown rocks whose ragged points are crown'd with weeds,
Where wild goats wander, and the vulture breeds ;
The scorching ardours of the dog-day noon,
The dark mysterious shades of the cold moon,
The smuggler's fire—the cavern dark and deep
Where fierce banditti their grim orgies keep ;
The gloom which gathers o'er the dread ravine,
Where frowns the blasted trunk—the naked pine—
And levell'd ruins of grey towers betray
The tale of armed feuds in ancient day ;
The howling storm, whose muster'd furies sweep
The boisterous billows of the raging deep ;
Whose pitchy scud runs rushing o'er the heaven
Before the yelling fiends of tempests driven ;
Sky-rending thunders, horrible in night,
Their blue-fork'd envoy flaring on the sight ;

The midnight conflagration—virgin woods
Where tangled nature fosters monster broods—
The scene of murder, where the pious rood
Marks the unhallow'd spot of victim blood ;
The towering crag—the precipice profound—
The yew-tree waving o'er the church-yard ground—
And every image of terrific hue,
The savage pencil of Salvator drew.

But hush !—I mark a doubtful streak of grey—
The dim forerunner of approaching day—
Break on my bars—dulling the lamp's frail light,
About to perish with the lingering night.
Oh ! I remember, when my joyful eyes
Loved to behold the infant Morn arise,
And watch each glimmering speck, each brightening ray
That spoke the car of glory on its way.

But what are now my mornings, erst so bright ?—
A hazy glimmer of uncertain light !

For me the Sun's extinct—his golden beam
Athwart these churlish bars must never stream.
Oh ! that their space would yield the morning air
A welcome access to this bosom bare !
Or that my feeble hand might traverse through,
And catch one drop of heaven's refreshing dew !
Alas ! 'tis long since morning zephyrs fann'd,
Or dawn's fresh dew-drop bathed this captive hand.

Soon will the swallow twitter—and the lark
Sound the retreat to night's last shade of dark :
The chirping people of the leafy wood
Fly their green roost to quest their early food :
The matin-bell awake the cares of morn,
The shepherd's whistle, and the huntsman's horn,
The rumbling wheel, and labour's various sound
Appeal to Echo's thousand ears around :
While Pleasure lightly springs a-foot—and I—
Count one day more of long captivity.

VIGIL SIXTH.

RISE, sluggish Earth ! rise, thou dull sleeper, rise—
Slave of the night ! thy dusky tyrant flies :
Collect thy pomp, and cast thy mourning weeds—
Aurora's train upon the welkin speeds :
Rise, sluggard ! rise, and meet the morning shine,
Gladness awaits thy day—alas ! not mine.

Hark ! Chanticleer detects first dawn of light,
Scares night's foul shades, and puts the wolf to flight :
Crime shrinks away, and dazzled owls retreat,
Till mustering witches rising Hesper greet.

Hail, morn ! Time's soberest hour—ah ! what a throng
Of blest conceptions to thy name belong ;
These walls oppress to madness as I think,
And all the hopes that rose reviving sink.

Captive in hell—and damn'd amidst the worst
Of those whom Heaven hath doom'd to pangs accursed,
He surely howls who first had heart to pen
Within a prison-wall his fellow men ;
Or to the arch foe-fiend himself we owe
The fell invention fraught with human woe,
Which humbles man's proud essence, and hath made
His person sport of power—a goods of trade—
Defeats his end, and frustrates the design
Of him who clothed us in his form divine.

Once as I ponder'd thus the livelong night,
My fever'd lids oppress'd with sleepless blight,

The mind—from irksome sorrow fain to flee
Through all the windings of wild revery—
Sought to divine how thralldom first began,
And all the ills it hath entail'd on man ;
When a stray spirit, versed in things sublime,
And Heaven's remotest chronicles of time,
Hung on his hovering wing the tale to tell,
And thus it was—if I remember well :—

When the Arch-fiend by impious pride impell'd,
Envied the great Eternal, and rebell'd ;
Seduced apostate angels to disown
Allegiant faith to the Almighty throne ;
Was hurl'd to hell, and with his thunder'd host
In hissing seas of endless pain was lost :
While Earth, to mark the triumph of its God,
Sprung from mis-shapen chaos at a nod,
Bearing that fairy garden on its breast,
Where the first pair, in heavenly favour blest,

The tranquil tenour of their fates pursued,
In the pure sweets of bright beatitude :
Till he, who Heaven renounced to sway o'er hell,
Feeling his breast with new-born envy swell,
Call'd his battalions of fallen spirits foul,
That err through hell's blue wilderness, and howl—
And in dark council plotted to destroy
God's favour'd man, and his abode of joy :
Till, urged by his divan, the Demon flew
The awful space and dreary chaos through,
Reach'd infant Earth—and sped, alas ! too well,
In the dread object of his errand fell.

This was the sightless Bard inspired to sing,
With mighty touch that mocks all rival string,
But left unsung a fragment of his lay
To some ambitious muse of after-day—
Which fain I'd try—but insufficient fire
Mars my poor skill, as thus I sweep the lyre :

When Satan reach'd his hell's tremendous gate,
That shuts out hope, and bars eternal fate,
Audacious pinion stretching forth to fly
To the new planet of his ancient sky—
He scann'd the route—but started with dismay
As his keen glance shot through the dismal way :
Monsters of horrid shapes—foul nameless things
Guarded the barrier void on hovering wings—
Scream'd fierce defiance as he faced the track,
And joining numbers, strove to blast him back.
Pausing he gazed—till quick, as if ashamed
To prove a terror which his pride disclaim'd,
He snatch'd a hissing brand from hell's blue fire
With lightning's flashing haste, and vengeance dire ;
Waved o'er his head the flame terrific bright,
Dash'd forth his awful wing—and rush'd to flight.

His blazing brand consuming havoc threw
Amid the legions of the monster crew,

Marring their grisly hosts—dispersed before
The damning scathe his dreadful right-hand bore :
Down—down the black abyss some whirling fell,
In giddy jeopardy, and pealing yell,
While others fled in horrible dismay—
And the archives of the Infernals say
He follow'd shouting, till his voice was drown'd
In the long distance of the vast profound ;
The meteor brand he bore, whose awful light
Made still more desolate the realms of night,
Illumed the Demon through the dubious way,
Until he burst from Chaos into day.

He hail'd the dawn—and sigh'd—then saw appear
The infant Earth, and the surrounding sphere :
Alighted first on Etna, and around
Sought blissful Eden's consecrated ground :
Next to Vesuvius wing'd—then trod the snow
Of Hecla's crest—and brow of Strombolo :

Yea ! touch'd on many another mountain-peak—
Whose ardours still his damned track bespeak—
Till his fell eye descried the happy seat
Of new-born love and infant friendship sweet ;
Admired, with baleful envy and surprise,
Poor Adam's dovelike Queen of Paradise ;
Transform'd his hideous shape, and glided near
Her fostering hand, and flatter'd her frail ear,
Till by Temptation won—to duty blind—
She sold felicity—and lost Mankind.

The sorrowing sun look'd red—nature stood still—
And consternation hung on every hill ;
A lowering terror gather'd o'er the wood,
Rode through the troubled air, and warp'd the flood ;
The Guardian Angel in default—dismay'd
At signs which spake his sacred trust betray'd—
Flew to his charge—but came, alas ! too late—
The twain had tasted Sin, and seal'd their fate.

He sought the author of the deed, and found
The scaly Demon gloating on the ground,
Coil'd near the artless victim of his guile,
With glistening eye, that fed on Virtue's spoil.

Pale with dread wrath, the Cherub raised a cry,
Whose loud alarm re-echoed through the sky,
And with the sound throng'd seraphs, like a flood
Of rain descending, round their leader stood.
Quick from the dust the guilty Demon rose,
Resumed his shape, and dared his angel foes—
Seized the dire bolt of damned flame that lay
Hid in some hill—Volcano till this day—
And, fierce at bay, fell'd the bright host that pour'd
Around the chieftain of the guardian sword,
Till gathering numbers forced him to retire
Still in defeat with vengeful wrath more dire—
Till desperation glaring in his eye,
He raised his towering front sublimely high,

And, shaking Earth beneath his giant tread,
At once bestrode high Alps and Andes' head—
Whirl'd his dread fires until their hissing light
Assumed hell's fiercest glow of angry white,
And, darting one last look at Heaven's abode,
He launch'd them upwards at the throne of God.

Th' Omnipotent arose * * * and with a look
That worlds around to their foundations shook—
While young Creation waited doom no less
Than one word blasting all to nothingness ;
Hurl'd back to Earth the impious ardours fell,
God's curse went with them—and it follow'd well.
Where the fiend-foe, with ponderous fetters bound,
Lay with a guard of angry Cherubs round,
God's herald lighted down—bade tumult cease—
And tumult, even to echo, sunk to peace.
He utter'd God's behest—and thunders broke
In dread salute of terror while he spoke :—

“ Ye Worlds !—ye Elements !—ye Angels, hear !
“ Thus saith our God !—receive his word with fear—
“ In the deep pit whose bottomless profound
“ Is girt with walls of darkness dense around,
“ Be cast in giddy helplessness to groan,
“ The Deicide who struck at Heaven’s high throne.
“ There let him sink engulph’d through rolling years,
“ Oppress’d with agony—unblest with tears—
“ Remorse his sole companion—and his brain
“ Stung with the certainty of endless pain ;
“ Till mankind, courting guilt, the fiend recall,
“ Pollute their sphere, and prove a second fall.
“ Let the unhallow’d fires he wielded be
“ The cursed agents of his liberty,
“ Conceal’d within the bowels of the soil,
“ Till wrench’d by mortals forth with fatal toil ;
“ Portentous signal of the monstrous birth,
“ Of blood, of crime, and anarchy on earth,
“ Let hell’s terrific portals open then,
“ And demons exercise a power o’er men—

“ Such is the awful will of the Most High—
“ Lord God Omnipotent of Earth and Sky.”

He ceased—and o'er high Heaven's extended plain
Astounding thunders, bursting, roll'd again.
Sudden the Cherubs seized their demon foe,
And dragg'd him to the black abyss of woe,
Whose depths he scarcely scann'd with withering frown,
When Heaven's wrath lieges dash'd him headlong down,
And o'er the head of the lost angel hurl'd
A mountain wilderness—an Alpine world.
While the fell fires accursed of Heaven were spread,
In creeping veins through Earth's mysterious bed,
Condensed into a metal—form'd in hate—
To man a dreadful talisman of fate.

But where was Adam and his weeping Eve,
The art of hell had triumph'd to deceive?
From Eden spurn'd, o'er deserts doom'd to roam,
Without a shelter, and without a home—

Without a home ?—ah no !—for mutual love
Can make a home of every grot and grove.
They err'd until they found some spot of rest,
Where Nature doubtless bloom'd in all her best,
And soon around a numerous offspring grew,
Till Eden lost was rivall'd by a new ;
While purity, and innocence, and peace,
Dwelt with them there, and spread with their increase.
Each little cabin was a nook for love,
Cherish'd on Earth, and hallow'd from above,
Where household altars reek'd with friendship's fire,
While luxury was unknown, and vain desire.
But the free chase—rich waters—forest fruits—
Their fleecy flocks—tamed herds—Earth's herbs and roots,
Gave all they ask'd—fit coverture and food,
Cursed with no guilty sting—no jealous feud.
Then social cities rose, and culture smiled
With garden beauty 'mid the desert wild ;
The sylvan revel, and the shepherd's reed
Were seen and heard through every grove and mead ;

Envy and Sorrow, Calumny and Pride,
On Earth found not one spot where to abide ;
Till Jealousy gain'd access to the breast,
And storm'd the peace of first Arcadian rest,
Inspired the swain to emulate and vie
With rival merit in fair Beauty's eye—
This led to love of ornament and power,
Then came distinctions, saddening every bower ;
Next Vanity stole in, with tawdry wings,
And precious value set on paltry things,
And tortured man's inventive thought to find
Superiority o'er fellow-kind.
But Happiness was fain ev'n yet to stay
Where crime and bondage had not found their way ;
Her sister Innocence still held a part,
In spite of weakness, in the human heart ;
Till, tainted by degrees, man sought to bind
Degrading fetters on the human mind,
Sought the material of so foul a chain,
Ev'n in the Earth's deep womb—nor sought in vain.

Each stroke that scoop'd the mine told ev'n to hell,
Hail'd by the fiends with silent transport fell ;
Till, when the steel attain'd the ore of fate,
The host leap'd up, and eyed their loosening gate ;
While through their ranks deep vows of mischief ran,
And Hell blew all her fires for falling Man,
Who, blind to destiny, smiled to behold
The metal big with fate—and call'd it Gold :
Tore it from struggling Earth, and, as he tore,
The fiends unchain'd set up a hideous roar,
Rush'd through the fatal chasm on the world,
And their black banner o'er the Globe unfurl'd.

Then avarice, mischief, tyranny, and guile,
Envy, and pride, black hate, and love of spoil,
Made conquest of the soul—while luxury came
And fired the wanton sense with lawless flame.
Red war wax'd up and raged, and murder crept
Upon the fated victim as he slept.

O'er Sea, and Earth—the City, and the wild,
With crime and base dishonesty defiled,
Man, sordid wretch ! with toil and study sought
The yellow God which now absorb'd his thought ;
In isles the most remote on the frail ship,
In Earth's profounds—dived for it in the deep—
Sought it where pest forbids the haunt of man,
And whelming whirlwinds sweep the caravan ;
High on the precipice's giddy head,
Or in the boisterous torrent's fretful bed,
In matter's mixtions—nay ! e'en from the sky
With art occult, and idle alchymy.

The brother set his brother at a price,
His sister unprotected left to vice,
Fathers their sinking sons refused to save,
And sons consign'd their fathers to the grave !—
Nay, there were mothers found on earth who led
Their victim daughters to a venal bed,

Barter'd their heart's best hopes, and sought to teach
That virtue, joy, and love, were to be rich—
Ay! yielded up to poverty and pain
The child who scorn'd to sell her hand for gain.
Earth grew a scene of wickedness and strife,
Of which base lucre was the soul and life ;
The wheel on which all human actions roll'd—
And still the cry of man was—"Gold !—Gold !—Gold !"

Hell's chief enlarged, exulted at the sound,
And smiled to see the anarchy around ;
Eyed his new kingdom with ferocious joy,
Like one whose nature gloried to destroy,—
E'en as those victors o'er their fellow-man
Mahomet—Atilla—a Jenghis Khan—
View'd the sad lands where millions cursed their name,
A prey to rapine, murder, and the flame ;
Still urged destruction—thirsted for the sight,
And smiled triumphant in their ruthless might.

So Satan eyed the scene of strife, and found
Long absent pleasure in his breast abound ;
While proud success inspiring fresh desire
To make his empire o'er the earth entire,
He call'd a synod of his followers foul,
And thus express'd the purport of his soul :

“ Behold, brave comrades, what our deeds have done !
“ Hell's gates are burst—and the new sphere is won,
“ And few there be of mortals who deny
“ Our potent sway in favour of the sky ;
“ From pole to pole Earth's planet is our own,
“ Subdued and faithful to our ardent throne ;
“ Men pant to serve us—nay ! aspire to climb
“ To all our towering eminence in crime.
“ And yet one thought still wounds ambition sore,
“ Disturbs my heart, and gnaws it to the core :—
“ Our new-won province groans beneath the load
“ Of empty temples, raised to honor God.

“ Indeed, full oft in mockery, still I see
“ Their first design is mockery of me.
“ Surrounded by our most subservient tools—
“ Arch hypocrites, and fanatics, and fools—
“ I aim to sap religion to its fall,
“ With idle forms, and dire schismatic brawl ;
“ Nay, turn it to a cloak for knaves to creep
“ To wealth and power, and hush mistrust asleep.
“ By me inspired, shrewd slaves shall strive by means
“ Of hair shirts, mitres, turbans, capuchines,
“ Oblations, genuflexions, nauseous cant,
“ Disgusting whining, and outrageous rant :—
“ Yea ! all that cunning may, by word or deed,
“ To mangle truth, and warp Heaven’s simple creed :
“ These shall support us with the Talmud’s page,
“ With Zendavesta those shall serve our rage ;
“ Some with the Shaster, Veidam, Pentateuch,
“ The Koran—ay ! and ev’n the Christian book :
“ Religion shall be all that knaves may well
“ Devise to profit self, and people hell.

“ Now black, now grey, now yellow, green or white,
“ Gold, silk, or sackcloth, robed, or naked quite—
“ Oh! it shall yet do more to plague weak Man
“ Than all the ills hell’s active hate can plan.
“ Though her true voice but speaks what reason knows,
“ That there ’s a God, from whom all virtue flows,
“ Who, showering good on this too-favour’d ball,
“ Design’d his gifts the common share of all :
“ Still human cunning shall conceal the torch
“ Of simple truth, in Superstition’s porch,
“ And trample sober sense, that it may rear
“ A pile of error most complex and drear ;
“ Where Speculation shall ope thousand doors,
“ And priestcraft fume, when honest Truth explores.
“ Though all adverse, in this men shall accord,
“ To arm their God with passions and a sword ;
“ And, pictured with more vices than their own,
“ Shall paint a devil on Creation’s throne.
“ —Yet not enough—for still these altars stand
“ Unrivall’d in proud grandeur o’er the land,

“ While all my power, and soul-subduing art,
“ Find temples only in the human heart.
“ Then be it yours a monument to raise
“ That shall proclaim that mine are now the days—
“ Yield—yield the honours to your monarch due,
“ Venge me my friends—and give me altars too.”

His demons bow'd—then flew to raise a fane,
That should perpetuate their leader's reign ;
With impious toil they trembled not to rake
Gomorrhah's ashes from their brimstone lake,
And therewith piled the walls—that fatal wood
Which bore rejected fruit, drank primal blood,
Yielded its binding timbers—while the sound
Of curses breathed by fiends of mischief round
Proclaim'd the first foundation of a pile,
Fell Satan measured with malignant smile.
The shields and spears with which the fallen had striven
In sacrilegious anarchy in heaven,

Were twisted into bars, and bolts, and chains,—
Token of tyrant force, and victim pains ;
While sombre terrors, sorrow, and despair,
Watching and tears, sighs, groans, disease, and care,
Silence and darkness, damps and dismal shades,
Regrets that wring—Remorse whose voice upbraids,
Translated from hell's desolate abyss,
Were gather'd to this damned edifice :
Earth shudder'd 'neath the fabric, and wax'd pale,
While fiends with horrid transport hail'd—THE JAIL!!!

* * * * *

Hark !—matin's chime—then night's sad watch is done,
And day's astounding bustle is begun ;
The smith's loud hammer on the anvil rings,
And calls the wakening thought to worldly things ;
In quick succession various sounds arise,
Till the roused city echoes to the skies.
Welcome, new day !—I hail thee as a friend—
Thy rising brings my Vigils to an end,

Marks an abridgment of my prison woes,
One day's advance upon the grave's repose.

Oh ! how the memory of the last long night
Shakes my exhausted spirit with affright ;
This burning couch—these shades e'en now profound,
Where midnight slept unhinder'd by a sound—
This leaden weight which hangs upon mine eye,
These cheeks my griefs bedew'd—yet scarcely dry—
Those throng'd reflections which assail the breast
When Care usurps calm night's oblivious rest,
That floating still through haggard fancy, ride
Like scatter'd wrecks when raging storms subside,
Maintaining feelings, which a sense of day
Would fain for brighter pictures chase away.

Come Hope, and flirt with a desponding heart !
Still thou canst charm it—false although thou art :
Shape me the image of delight to come,
Change pain to smiles, and hush affliction dumb :

Here frame illusions as thy art once built,
Cheer with thy dreams—and cheat me as thou wilt—
Fain would I bid Reality adieu,
Believe her false—that thou alone art true!

Still why despair at what may not endure?
Is not fate changeful?—is the grave not sure?—
The longest night must end—the saddest day
Lasts but a glimpse, and fades in turn away.
Millions have laugh'd with whom the jest is o'er,
And millions too have wept, that weep no more.
What boots it then life's pleasure or distress,
One sorrowing pang the more—one pang the less?
The son of Philip revell'd—triumph'd—wept—
Bustled about the globe awhile—and slept.
Cæsar just hail'd our sphere, and bade adieu—
Brutus hush'd him to sleep—he slumbers too.
That hero but of yesterday, whose arms
Fill'd the whole earth with wonder and alarms;

Whom monarchs served and flatter'd—fear'd the frowns,
And kiss'd his hands for tributary crowns ;
His giant projects—triumphs—grandeur—throne—
Where are they now ?—where are they !—past and gone :
And now, alas ! the meanest hind may tread
With safe contempt on that anointed head,
Which late contain'd within its busy space
A force to shake old empires to their base.
What boots it then the restless soldier shone
A demi-god on Europe's brightest throne ?—
That fortune blest—or mean oppression broke
His mighty heart on yon far sea-girt rock ?—
Since now forgot, as if he ne'er had been—
While other actors fill the fretful scene—
We only snatch his thought from things gone by,
To shape a pageant, or to palm a lie ?
Thus the bare wretch, and prince deck'd with a crown,
Alike in dust, lay pomp and misery down ;
Corruption's touch, unmindful of the frame,
Confounds distinctions—or leaves but a name.

Name!—empty sound—how much doth it avail
When echo murmurs to the coffin-nail?—
What recks it then, O vanity! at last
Where the fleet instant of the life is past?—
Whether in desert wilds—or princely halls,—
In clay-built cabins—or in prison-walls?

Full many a heart hath wept sad years away,
That lived to smile in fortune's happier day;
And chance hath often led the suffering slave
Through fate's dark maze to fill a monarch's grave;
While deepest dungeons too have render'd up
Their saddest guests to quaff life's sweetest cup.
Then why shouldst thou despair—my foolish heart?
Must I not hope because of present smart?
Or can my alter'd mind alone imbue
Her active pencil in a sombre hue?—
Oh no! in transient moments of delight
She lends to things a tint—so warm—so bright,

Clings with such fervour to the happy thought,
I feel me fated for a better lot.
Then, Sorrow, cease to triumph o'er my heart !
Seek some more torpid bosom, and depart ;
For I will now indulge the richest dreams
That e'er were deck'd with Fancy's gorgeous beams—
Chase prison-memory hence, and lightly fly
Each thought which brings a tear-drop to the eye ;
And even Alicia's image should I trace
I'll wrap with kindest smiles her seraph face,
And paint her all—all she was wont to be,
Still young, fair, artless—and yet true to me.
Nay nought from past shall the choice memory bring
That comes not wafted on the whitest wing,
And nought in future will the mind pourtray
But shall be dress'd in hope's most bright array.
What !—though blest fancy, hope, and memory, wave
Around my heart like flowerets o'er a grave,
If still their tints the mind's sad eye can win,
From pondering on the skeleton within ?

Adieu, sad couch !—fain would I leave with thee
Each bitter pang—each irksome revery ;
But ah ! the mind must throw off many a care
Ere gentle Sleep will strew his poppies there.

Hark !—rising murmurs ring around the walls !
And o'er the flags some heavy footstep falls,
While echoes challenged through the mansion speak,
Bolts, groaning, move—and heavy portals creak.
Hush !—'tis my jailer ! well I ken his tread
Who brings the humble cruse and daily bread.

God of the Universe—to Thee I bend,
Blest gatherer up of tears—the Captive's friend—
Receive my daily homage—to thy throne
I raise a heart, though broken, all thine own :
Though worldly good, and love, and friendship flee,
Doth not my soul find more than these in Thee ?
Yea,—the gall'd spirit from thy hallow'd springs
Draws drops of balm rare to the cup of kings.

Oh ! I have still saved treasures from the wreck—
My trust in Thee—this image round my neck,
This none can ravish—that I still will hold
Until the breast which cradles it sink cold.
The tempest of the mind will soon blow o'er,
These eyes that wake to tears shall shed no more,
And every object of regret or hate
Perish like me beneath a common fate ;
The sorrows here that dwell shall pass away,
These walls themselves must crumble to decay,
And the wild winds of winter whistle round
Their gloomy ruins levell'd with the ground ;
Yea—not a vestige shall remain to tell
The sighs that quiver'd here—the tears that fell ;
But thy blest mansion, O my God ! shall be
Imperishable through eternity ;
And there the captive soul at last shall gain
Rich recompense for sublunary pain.

Ye, young and gay !—pursue your fond career,
And keep the cheek unwater'd by a tear—
Fly each bright day to meet a brighter morn,
But as ye pluck the flower—beware the thorn !
A smile is precious !—since keen sorrows lie
In ambush round the heart to plant a sigh ;
Then prize its beam, as if it were a gem
Richer than ever graced a diadem :
Lull ye with dreams of love, and still believe
Firm faith in friendship never can deceive :
Be happy while ye may—for by-and-bye
These fond delusions must for ever fly.
Like ye, my youth wore once a cloudless brow,
But black regret obscures its tablet now.
Blest feeling here is dead—to wake no more—
My spirit flags—and oh ! my heart is sore.
Pity the wretch condemn'd, alas ! to fight
With the long horrors of a Captive Night.

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